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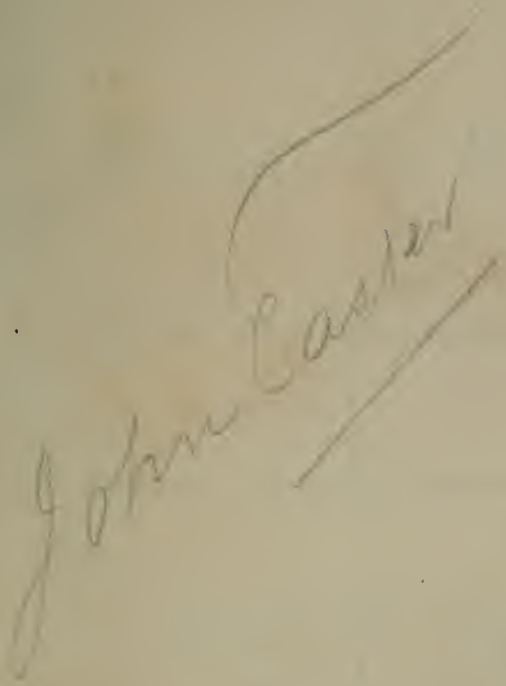

Westminster Abbey;

OR,

THE DAYS OF THE REFORMATION.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "WHITEFRIARS," "CÆSAR BORGIA," &c.

Struggling in dark eclipse, and shooting day
On either side of the black orb that veiled it!

DRYDEN.

Quid non potest simulata religio?

ERASMUS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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WESTMINSTER ABBEY;

OR,

The Days of the Reformation.

CHAPTER XXV.

ST. JULIAN-OF-THE-PILGRIMS.

The moment Henry had pronounced his decision in the conflict between the monks and the visitor, the latter retired from the scene of action. And Gardiner, for once, reported truly, that he proceeded into the sanctuary; but not truly in the motives he assigned for his retirement thither. Roodspere's principal object was to avoid the reproaches and remonstrances, or, very possibly, violent interference of Wolsey in causing his removal from an arena which he was determined on no account to quit. Every feeling of the man and of the theologian was roused in Roodspere's breast to a contrary effect. And although well aware that his rash utterance must have completed his ruin in Wolsey's favour, and that the

most formidable charge that could be made against a man in those days—above all, against a clergyman—was set in motion, with consummate skill and power, to crush him, he was resolved to abide the hazard. The spectacle of the maddening remorse of Bilney in his apostasy, and of the tranquillity he had regained in his resolution to return to the profession he had abandoned, might sufficiently have warned him to keep steady in his course. But a feeling mightier than even the enthusiasm of his convictions would alone have sufficed to determine Roodspere on it. The object of the pure but inconceivably passionate love that had become the master-motive of his existence, was evidently again consigned to the dominion of the subtle and remorseless monk whose motives there was so much reason to suspect and dread. It could not be doubted that Sancgraal would be enabled, by the queen's favour, to resume his old position and influence with Lily-Virgin. And Roodspere trembled when he called to mind how potent was the empire formerly established by him in that credulous and innocent mind! And he knew that, however assiduously he had laboured at their extirpation, the superstitions Sancgraal cultivated in

it, from its earliest dawn, still shadowed the spirit of Lily-Virgin in the sunniest openings he had himself effected. The terrors and remorse she continued to suffer even while sharing his love, and becoming the convert of his opinions, sufficiently attested the fact. Nay, it was not at all certain how she might regard the information, certain now to reach her, from the most venerated lips, that his teachings were false and heretical! He had ever represented them to her in their consonance with the oracles of the Gospel, but had not ventured to expound also that they were in opposition to the received orthodoxy!

It had therefore become the primal object of Roodspere—and self-preservation rendered it also necessary—to destroy Sancgraal's empire, by a full exposure of his licentious, and in all other respects detestable and dangerous character. Dan Gloria's apparently reckless approach to a revelation of her sex—the public outrage and insult she had received—working in so inflammably-fraught a spirit—rendered it now very possible, he thought, that she would lend her aid in the task, if personally assured of safety and pardon. He still shrunk, indeed, with an inexplicable sentiment, from any attempt to form a coa-

lescence with so depraved and dangerous an enigma, whose manner towards himself, in spite of his own almost virginal purity of ideas, and modesty of demeanour, had long almost equally excited his fears and disgust. But, supported by Cromwel, and the visible favour of a lady whose potency with the royal judge, however founded, could not be doubted, Roodspere resolved to bring forward all he knew or suspected in the relations between the prior and his victim, and challenge disproof before that public tribunal to which himself and his adversaries were alike relegated. Meanwhile it was obviously in the last degree impolitic to furnish the monks with any more weapons against himself; and his warm affection for Bilney made him gladly avail himself of an argument he knew would be most powerful with him, to sway him from the rash and premature development of his purposes in counteracting the ill effect of his former tergiversation.

With the intention of seeking him, and divulging his wishes in this respect, Roodspere entered the Sanctuary, passing under the massive archway of the Gatehouse through "Jonah's Jaws." But it was not for the first time he had threaded the mazes of the

Gehenna of Westminster. Hell Valley, Tophet, Paradisus Stultorum, the Ambry—haunts of every species of crime, disease, and misery—had been frequently traversed by him. But with far different purposes from those that usually escorted even the depraved ecclesiastics of the age into their murky depths! As a physician attaches himself to the worst symptom of a disorder first, so had Roodspere applied his earliest efforts, his sharpest corrosives, and keenest strokes of the knife, to this nigh incurable moral cancer, while in the abbey-schools he endeavoured to open new courses for a pure and revitalizing blood! In the Sanctuary he believed that he beheld the full rankness and hemlock-flowering of the monastic system, founded on the dogmas of purchaseable pardon—on absolutions which set not loose from sin, but to sin. As it were a missionary among wild tribes, he set up the white standard of the cross in this reeking waste, and with its "Excelsior" mottoed in all his utterances, gradually produced a marked and marvellous effect. More especially as, in adherence to their profoundly devised plan, the monks offered no visible obstruction to his efforts even in this capital of their dominion.

But they followed him with assiduous spies, under various crafty disguises, taking dangerous note of all he said and did — who reported that he denied the merits of the saints, and preached pardon through Christ only! Perhaps they were not without hopes to detect or lure him into the practice of the vices which themselves knew too well infected the whole corrupt system of clerical discipline. But the most shameless women of the Ambry learned at last to abase their roving eyes in Roodspere's presence, and the gamesters and profligates of the Paradisus and Tophet threw their dice into corners, and ceased their drunken revels, as he passed. Roodspere's spirit had the infrangible solidity with the pellucid brightness of the diamond.

He was thus enabled to give Bilney some useful general directions in taking the refuge offered by this city of sin. But he had never himself been in what might be called its palace-royal, the hostel of St. Julian of the Pilgrims, where Cromwel recommended Bilney to take up his abode. He won his assent by dexterously representing how fine a shoal the affluence of superstitious pilgrims at this season offered to his spiritual nets. His real purpose was to disgust Bilney as quickly as

possible of the sojourn, and so daring a challenge to observation he considered the surest method of avoiding it. Regard for his beloved pupil's safety would, he thought, preserve Bilney from any very overt act of imprudence, in such society.

St. Julian-of-the-Pilgrms was an inn originally founded by the wealthy abbey it belonged to as a place of free resort for the numerous devotees of St. Edward, whom they speedily found it inconvenient to lodge on their own premises. Its use was at first restricted altogether to these persons, who were not only lodged but supplied with food and other ministrations, gratis, during a whole week, which was considered a proper devotional period. The oblations of the pilgrims at the shrine amply covered the expenses of this hospitality, during several ages, and preserved the building for such uses the like period. But the failing devotion of latter times, and the corruption that had overtaken all things monastic, by degrees transmuted St. Julian-of-the-Pilgrims into something scarcely to be defined from a common tavern or hostel, saving that it enjoyed the exclusive patronage of the monks, and was still supposed to furnish them with a portion of their revenues.

What became of those piously affixed to the original foundation, was, under Treasurer Gislebert's administration, matter only of surmise. The keeper, degenerated from a hospitable frater into an extortionate inn-keeper, and who flourished in an extremely bad odour by the name of Rogue-the-Rogue Solomon, was believed to account to him only for the profits of the benefice. For benefice it was, and at one time conjoined the office of chaplain to its duties of steward. But it was now held by one who was stated to be a convert from Judaism, effected by Prior Sancgraal in his devote youth, and who—if it had ever been a house of prayer—had now changed St. Julian's literally into a den of thieves.

Roodspere was aware of the evil repute of this place; but he found reality exceeded anticipation. It was a very extensive building, and once upon a time necessarily so; but even where not assailed, the popular superstitions were dying out in the new dayspring, like earth-flames in the sun! Consequently the lodgings running round the extensive courtyard which the hostel enclosed in the shape of a parallelogram, were principally leased out in sluttish tenements; and St. Julian's proper was confined to the building, at the end opposite

the entrance, and one or two upper corridors, opening on the yard in galleries. A large hall, learnedly styled the xenodochium, profanely, *Ciborium Latronum*, was the principal chamber of the hospice; and entering at its broad and ever open porch, Roodspere found himself in the midst of an extraordinary assemblage of both sexes, engaged in feasting, swearing, laughing, singing, dicing, and other congenial diversions. These guests, among whom he discerned several monks' gowns—were waited upon by a number of boys and grown-up servitors, who mocked the tattered cast-off garbs of acolytes and vergers by wearing them. In the midst of the uproar and merriment, at the head of the principal table, under a canopy that in like manner burlesqued a dais of honour—king of the saturnalia by right of his high birth and relationship to the prior, but more so by the stormy ascendancy of his character — sate the Lord Bigod. Everything around bore traces of the rude wassail and disorder; and even so unlikely a cause as an harangue from Bilney seemed only to furnish matter for uproarious, drunken laughter, and amusement to this noble chief of the Sanctuary and his satellites. With much pain, Roodspere ascertained that Bilney was addressing

this wild crew, in warm and disordered accents —but with more surprise, that his discourse was interrupted only by this vociferous merriment and applause.

He listened for a moment and heard his words. "Yea, sirs, I say, prove it me! prove that Christ ever wore shoes of silver and gilt, or set with pearls and precious stones; or that Christ ever had two crosses of silver, twelve axes, and a pillar of silver, parcel-gilt, borne before him!—or that ever he rode a mule trapped with cloth of gold!"

"No, no, and therefore the cardinal is Anti-Christ, I say, as thou maintainest! And here comes another of us—the strangest rat of us all, if he is his father's son!" shouted the Lord Bigod, suddenly espying Roodspere. "A health, a health, my lads! but ye must drink it in such liquor as ye can get at your own cost, for I am starved at my brother's expense, and not at mine own honourable liberality here! This is he who will help us to ding down their old houses about their ears though he make an earthquake in his own cupboard withal! Heard ye his sermon, sirs? By Lot's youngest daughter, who was the fairest wench eye ever saw, saving Mistress Malkin yonder! he will smoke the monks' hives for them,

and we shall share the honey among us yet, like the League of Smalcald! I will have my share of Westminster yet, and Dan Devil's-foot, my brother, shall be glad to pay me in ransom thrice the beggarly three thousand bezants I asked of him, to redeem my land from the crucifying Jews!—I mean thee no offence, old Rogue-the-Rogue!—thou art a Christian now, thou wottest!—Turn me thine other cheek!—All, all! There shall be a merry world again in England, my masters, and as many cracked coins as there are shaven crowns! It was after thy sermon, thou unmatched clerk, that Sir John Russell whispered me he would rather have the Convent Garden to his share than the best manor in the king's gift! Why should he whisper me that? I say it to St. Edward's beard, were there half a dozen good fellows here of my mind, we would sack the Abbey this very day—melt all their pixes and crucifixes into jolly ducats—lay hands on old throttling Gislebert's treasures, that must else to Rome to quarrel with the Cardinal's—and spend all like honest men and soldiers!"

"So say I!—here am I to make two of a mind, Bully Bigod!—an you lack but a good soldier!" stammered a huge, drunken reprobrate, in a tarnished military garb, exactly

answering to the fallen noble's former description of "the big swearing deserter of the wars," who had cheated him of some money in gambling. But the whole wild oration was received with such rapturous applause that Bigod yelled frantically to the assemblage, they would make Clerk Roodspere their leader, and advance at once to the assault. But as Roodspere at once and peremptorily declined this extraordinary honour, the baron swore at least he would drink his health, and confusion to the monks his enemies. He accordingly snatched a goblet from before the deserter—who, by no means anticipating that great loss, could not interfere to prevent it, if indeed his boasted courage would not also have failed him—and draining the draught to the dregs, he fell insensibly drunk on the floor. Roodspere availed himself of the confusion caused by this incident to request Bilney's private attention; and the latter apologising somewhat ashamedly for the rashness of his zeal, led Roodspere to an apartment it appeared he had secured as a solitary tenement at a considerable mulct of the emoluments of Solomon Rogue-the-Rogue. It was the last cell in a long ruinous dortour or dormitory, which was tenanted by no other guest, and it was furnished with some degree

of comfort and convenience, considering the place and time. The desolation of this lodging recommended it to the Reformer even on a moral score, as evidence of the decline of the superstitious belief in the efficacy of pilgrimages.

A long conversation between Bilney and his heroic disciple completely connected the broken links of their respective stories. Roodspere related all his sufferings and adventures, from the hour they parted in Cambridge to the eventful crisis just encountered, including his passion for Lily-Virgin, and its disastrous results. Bilney was deeply moved by all he heard, and acquiesced with extreme readiness in Roodspere's reasons and entreaties for desisting, awhile at least, from his project of openly recanting his recantation. He promised to abide the issue of this entangled affair before proceeding on any action of his own, eagerly adopting Roodspere's view of the good results that might ensue from Anne Boleyn's interference. And this was the first occasion that name quitted the glittering atmosphere of courts, to enter the discussions of theologians. On his side, Bilney had not much news to tell; things were little changed at Cambridge, only the suspi-

cions and ill-will of the dominant party were evidently deepened by the mission of two strange monks among them, who came making inquiries concerning Roodspere and his former associates. Roodspere recognised them immediately as two bitter opposers of his labours in the schools, whom he had suddenly missed from Westminster, and thought to be removed by the prior's policy. These were the professors of the art of illumination, and the vestiarius, or embroiderer of the robes worn in the sacerdotal offices in the abbey.

The two reformers remained in anxious converse until Roodspere perceived by the growing darkness that it was the hour when the Sanctuary closed for the night. He took his leave therefore of Bilney, promising to return frequently, to consult and communicate every intelligence of importance until the arrival of the day of examination named by the king. Bilney promised not to leave the Sanctuary meanwhile, and to expose himself as little to observation as possible. In this confabulation so much time was spent that Roodspere, resolved not to give his enemies the advantage of pretending he had betaken himself to sanctuary, with difficulty saved his distance, and reached the Gatehouse at the

moment when the little jailer, Mugwort, was about to bar the postern for the night. He observed that Mugwort civilly awaited his approach, and he had frequently noticed him among his auditory in the Sanctuary. But he had no notion he had secured a friend and ally in so unlikely a personage. This proved to be the case. "I had rather have turned the key on you that side of the hedge, master visitor!" he observed, in an emphatic whisper, as Roodspere passed. "I do hope, natheless, your reverend honour is not going home again among the monks—for methinks until Marchant Hunne's hangman is hanged, there is no safe sleeping o'nights under their displeasure, within cockcrow of St. Peter's here!"

"You have not forgiven Dr. Martin's defeat as yet, I find!" replied Roodspere, with a smile.

"He is well avenged to-day! The king has trampled St. Dominic into a feather pancake!" replied the jailer, who, himself taking great interest in the subject, readily communicated all that he had been enabled to gather concerning the royal cock-fight in the cloisters. Of course the motives of the extraordinary scene were by no means apparent to Mugwort, or to any other unin-

formed reporter of a result which had its springs in the deepest machinery of state policy and court intrigue. Roodspere himself could discern only so much as gave him the greatest perplexity, as well as diminished his confidence in the value of Anne Boleyn's kindness to himself. But he endeavoured to thank the jailor for his tidings as if they included nothing extraordinary, and wished him good night. Nevertheless, Mugwort, an acute though altogether untaught man, perceived something unusual in his manner. "So be it, my master! But come whenever you will, by day or by night, if you call to me with the wood-pigeon's note, I will let you into the Sanctuary, unbeknown to my wife! Prior Sancgraal, when he was a younger man, taught me the trick; but he imitated the raven's croak, and to a marvel! Heaven knows, I have let him in and out oftener than old Gislebert ever guessed, and in strange company too! I was to blame in that belike, and would balance it with a better deed! And, sir, you may trust in me. Though I stood at the bar for Hunne's murther—were all saddles on their proper horses—I was only guilty of making the stars

dance with Friar Gildas, in St. Julian's, that night!"

"What are thou broaching there, sour barrel of lies?" cried a voice from a barred upper window at this moment—the dread voice of Long Meg of Westminster! Luckily the grating prevented her from looking perpendicularly down to where they stood.

"Coming, sweetheart, coming! It is your gossip and I lamenting over St. Dominic's doom!—Come when you will, I say, master visitor, I will admit you into the Sanctuary! The monks, for their own sakes, will not dare to touch you there; and if they would, the Sanctuary men will suffer none of their privileges to be molested! The pigeon's note, as thus, coo, coo, coo, shall waken me at any hour.—I sleep in the ground chamber within!"—were the hurried words with which the husband of Long Meg concluded his friendly advice.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE GREAT CLOISTER.

There n'is, I wis, no serpent so cruel,
When man treadeth on his tail, ne half so fell,
As woman is when she hath caught an ire;
Veray vengeance is then all her desire.

CHAUCER.

ROODSPERE was pleased and grateful to find himself not so absolutely destitute of alliance and aid in the Abbey as he had imagined, for, after the events of the morning, even Quodvultdeus gave him the cold shoulder. Yet he had no apprehensions regarding his personal safety. To repeat the tragedy of Hunne, if in reality one of secret slaughter, would be too hazardous a venture. His blood, it was certain, would be too peremptorily demanded to make the adoption of any such homicidal expedient likely among men so craftily governed, though so violently exasperated. It was also probable the monks imagined he had taken refuge in the Sanctuary. It was now

night, and though the moon was particularly brilliant, no one appeared in sight who could be supposed to watch his movements. The monks and their satellites seemed absorbed in the great feast with which they usually celebrated the close of their patron's saintday. The passage leading to Roodspere's apartment descended to the cloisters, and was easily reached. He had himself adopted, for special reasons, the Benedictine rule he enforced among the monks, of keeping his own chamber in order, and permitting no visitation in it. He also kept it locked, and had the key with him. It was easy for him therefore to fulfil his intention, and resort to his usual resting-place, without exciting notice.

The deserted condition of the Great Cloister, the glare of lights in the Refectory, and the sounds of joyous revelry that saluted him thence as he crossed to his wonted entrance, satisfied him that the monks were keeping their orgy with customary festivity. The rebuff sustained by their visitor was not sufficiently decisive to authorise more, but it seemed to Roodspere that either they imagined he had taken flight, or that they did not sufficiently appreciate the perplexity and danger of their prior's position. Sancgraal himself

seemed a good deal of the latter opinion, as Roodspere thought when, prompted by a secret incentive that was not mere curiosity, he ventured to take a survey of the scene through one of the broad windows on the Cloister. The monks were joining in a vociferous bacchanalian chorus, all standing, and wreathed hand in hand, goblet to goblet—while the prior, reclining in his exalted chair, sate evidently insensible to the joyous uproar around him, wrapped, like a black pine in the bright sunshine, in his own sombre entity.

But Roodspere was well pleased to find his rival remained in the abbey: and he hastened with a lighter heart to his chamber. There was neither fire nor candle in it, and as the moon was clouded at the moment he entered, all was dark and sufficiently dreary. This gloomy aspect of things perhaps made him, for the moment, regret that, according to monastic custom, for purposes of supervision, the door of his chamber could only be secured on the exterior. But he entered without much hesitation or misgiving on that score; and approached his lattice to open it and let in the fresh air, for there was a strange and very strong odour of flowers in the chamber. Whilst thus engaged, it must be confessed

Roodspere's heart stood still with an emotion of terror when he suddenly distinguished a rustling sound in the direction of the huge bed, whose downy appliances he had displaced for a mattress of straw. He turned, with a deadly sentiment of dread, towards the sound, which resembled the movement of an animal in its lair; and simultaneously the moonlight, breaking through a cloud, and piercing the matted ivy before the now open lattice, revealed—kneeling in abject humility at his feet—the præcentor, Dan Gloria-in-Excelsis! With the same glance of light and recollection, Roodspere discerned that this fatal nondescript was still in the courtesan disarray she had presented herself in to the plaudits of the Westminster mob, and the unmanly fury of her paramour. It was the flowers and essences she was still decked with that diffused the enervating perfume he had inhaled. And it seemed to his startled—nay, his affrighted gaze—that those robes were still more loosely and disorderedly cast about her—perhaps with the haste and terror of flight. But in the eyes, whose wildly glowing gaze was now upreared to his, he could only hope he discerned that vinous delirium which, among other offences, Prior Sancgraal had confidentially

informed him, the choirmaster too frequently indulged in.

"What is this, master præcentor? What do you here, and in this shameful—or rather shameless—disguise?" he exclaimed, after an amazed pause of several moments.

"It is no disguise, it is my proper garb! Master Roodspere, I am a woman; a woman, and a woeful suppliant and fugitive to your mercy and protection!" replied Dan Gloria, in the most lowly tones to which entreaty could possibly reduce a voice so gorgeously harmonized; and observing that Roodspere retreated several steps, she continued with sudden bitterness and animation, "What amazes you therein, master visitor? Is my shadow blackened by the revelation of this truth? I am a woman—an evil one it may be—but yet more miserable — miserable as heart can shape! A woman, and at your feet imploring mercy and protection! — Priest as you are, you are yet a man, and can you refuse them to one who is else abandoned by heaven and earth alike?"

"What if your wicked lord, or some of his as evil myrmidons detect you here—at this hour, in a secrecy and retirement I have ever for-

bidden to you ?" returned Roodspere, rallying after another protracted and agitated pause.

" We can away with that fear !—and have you lived in a monastery even but so long, and know not how to secure a latch ?" returned Dan Gloria, and rising with strange vivacity, she stepped hurriedly to the door, and fastened it with a wooden peg it almost seemed she had brought with her for the purpose. Roodspere gazed on during this brief operation in confused and bewildered surprise ; and he had scarcely at all recovered from the paroxysm, when the too real actress in the interlude of the " Devil's Apples," returned.

" Why do you gaze at me so strangely ? Or is it indeed true, master visitor, that you have never yet suspected my woful secret ?" continued Dan Gloria, interrupting the silence, her eyes glittering and gleaming in the moonlight with a strange whirl of excited passions. The former cause of complaint was at least removed, for Roodspere turned with disgust and horror from the glow of the eddying flames in those wontedly too wildly brilliant orbs.

" Mad woman !—since you disgrace your sex by avowing yourself one !—what would you with me at this hour ? Speak, and begone from my presence for ever !" said Roodspere.

"Be not angry with me, dearest Raphael! —master visitor, I would say! If I am nought else to you, I am the enemy of your enemy!— of the brutish monk who smote me before all men's eyes—who is even now seeking me to my perdition, and who—but that it is impossible he should dream I am here—had dragged me forth ere now to the slaughter!" replied Dan Gloria.

"And how came you here? Are there false keys to my chamber? And what hoped you else, maddening your dire master with the revelation you now so unblenchingly confirm?" said Roodspere.

"Alas, alas! I might no longer endure my shame of shames!—The revelation was meant for one alone . . . But the strong wine I drained to give me courage to defy his crafty ordinances, played me false! Or rather I was drunk with wrongs, and I dreamed that if you knew me to be who I am, you would, you might,—at least you would no longer look upon me with abhorrence! With some pity, some compassion, holy clerk, I thought it yet might be!"

"The purple madness works still within you!" replied Roodspere, shrinking from the wretched woman's supplicating gesture. "You must not tarry here! What protection I can

yet afford from the brutal violence of your paramour shall be yours — but much more, if you will aid me in his open detection and punishment! Your own pardon and remission I dare well promise you — and what else can you demand or require?"

"My pardon? Heaven's pardon from your blessed lips, I could indeed receive with assurance! Do you promise me that?" returned the chorister, with wild eagerness.

"The pardon whereof I speak is of this world; the pardon of Him the most offended of all, you can only obtain for yourself!" replied Roodspere.

"Ay, there it is again!" said Dan Gloria, in impassioned accents of disappointment. "But look to it, fair clerk! What lesson of despair is this thou teachest? Since only earth is ours, let it be ours indeed! Let us revel out existence like the rich wine-dream it is, or may be made; and, letting the future care for itself, have only thought how best to enjoy the now!"

"This doctrine have I not taught you. Heaven forbid!" replied Roodspere, sternly. "It offends my ears almost as much as your indecent array mine eyes. Leave my presence now, and never again return to it, until you have

changed both to a fitting sobriety and holier resolve. Until you come prepared to make what little reparation you can, to all men's offended sights and sense, by resuming the garb and decency of your sex, and visiting on him who deprived you of both the just punishment of his crimes!"

"I come prepared to do so; 'tis therefore I am here. This is a woman's garb, I trow! and I trust my purposes and discourse are of a womanish folly to content expectation on all scores," returned Dan Gloria, with a dark flush. "What would you more? I am at your devotion wholly here! I know that myself have none other hope or resource; but without my guidance you must also perish, whose safety infinitely more I desire. I am ready to unmask this pretended saint; to disclose to all the world how, under pretence of conversion, by the use of a wizard eloquence he hath, he lured me to follow him, as I imagined, to salvation and redemption, even from revellous Venice hither. All I have seen and know of him and his fellow-satyrs' doings here—his infinite hypocrisy!—old Gislebert's embezzlement, with his connivance, of the abbey's incomings, and where they have hidden their ill-got treasure; his secret correspond-

ence and collusion with the Jew who keeps the robber's den in the Sanctuary, called St. Julian's hostel; the share he takes in the bloody gains of its assassins; his pretended fasts in the hermitage, where oft he and I have revelled out the day in such like feasts as church princes give one another in Italy. All this I will confess!—and is there not enow therein to keep the whale's jaws aghast from swallowing the prophet that is else to be cast to appease the raging surges that we hear around?"

"Nay, but you must confess more—the whole! These, though enormities, are but a part of the truth!" replied Roodspere.

"Ay, to you, most dear confessor! and thus—at your feet!" returned Dan Gloria; and Roodspere averted his eyes with an emotion of horror, rather than of any other sentiment, from the display of wanton and luxurious charms, revealed by the very humility of the attitude into which the impassioned and dangerous suppliant now cast herself. "But what need that I should say the words? If it be a sin to love, Miserere Domine!—for never woman loved as I have loved—so long in silence too!—nay, as I love still, and must for ever!—and, Raphael, bright archangel of goodness, thee!"

There was a profound pause — a silence that might have been heard! Roodspere continued to gaze in a species of blank incredulity at the kneeling figure before him— and, after one upward glance, Dan Gloria appeared to cower and shrink into the very dust at his feet, in an agony of shame and fear that perhaps attested she had still some remains of her sex's natural sentiments. But after a moment she rallied to her more habitual tone of wild banter and defiance. "Why stare you so affrightedly, Master Roodspere?" she exclaimed. "Cry you mercy, most virtuous clerk! methought the mantle of the night was upon me — yet these ivy leaves make but a checkered Vulcan's net in the moonlight, it is true! Remember, Mother Eve was only shamefaced when she sinned—and it is none to worship — ay, to worship—the blessed saints! And thou art one—or else some marble image of religion which it is as lawful to adore!"

"Rid me only but utterly of thy presence, flagitious woman! I have heard that revenge maddens its victims—but revenge and wine together more than madden thee! Hence, I say, or by heaven!—and I am not given to idle oath-making—I will summon thy para-

mour himself to bear witness how I loathe and spurn the allurements that made him a murtherous adulterer, and yourself his accomplice, murtherous wife of Richard Hunne!" These were the terrible words of Roodspere's reply.

Dan Gloria started on her feet as that dread name, associated with such a world of guilty memories, was pronounced—and stood for several minutes a petrification of fear and surprise.

"The wife—the murtheress—of Richard Hunne!" she gasped at last. "What devil has betrayed me unto him?"

"Thyself—and even now! It was but conjecture until now; but Cromwel ever, from your first meeting, recognised you as the debased Dalilah of the German siege in Rome. The rest of your story pieces all too well!" returned Roodspere.

"The wife—the murtheress—of Richard Hunne—the Dalilah of the Roman camp! And knowing this so long—from the first believing me to be what I am—didst thou spurn, despise, drive me from thy presence?" said Dan Gloria, with an expression of truly fiendish despair and rage, mingled with incredulity.

"From the first — ever!—I doubted not that you were a woman, abandoned of all decency and goodness—the accomplice of a wretch, who crowns infinite crimes with the worst, and is a murtherer!" replied Roodspere.

"It is false! there is no manner of truth in it! The stern old man, who was ever angry and impatient if a straw were in his way, took thought and slew himself!" she returned with frantic vehemence.

"Were it even so, they who drove him to despair and suicide are as much his murderers as if they had tightened the noose that strangled him," said Roodspere. "Anchor not thy soul upon that rotten reef! it is of unstable glistening sea-spar only! — And now you know my thoughts fully, go and plot with him my destruction also!"

"No, Roodspere, no! If even I would, I know well what only I can expect from the tiger mood in which he now rages for my destruction! I saw him from my hiding-place in the church, search every nook and cranny—as he deemed—hours after he must have thought his search in vain! and there was that in his eye which—yes, it may well be, Hunne was murthered! It was even with such a look

he left me on that night! But, howsoever, it were . . . I am past shame, or should be, methinks—and I tell thee, once more, I love thee, Raphael, a thousand-fold more than I can speak — even more than I hate thine enemy — and to infinitude, beyond even the apprehension of the pale snow-girl thou hast so long striven in vain to warm with love into humanity! Ha! do you start now? Sir priest, you may hence discern that I know you are no better than the rest of us! Remember your last meeting in the bower of the old oak, where you played the ancient serpent full as well as any Sancgraal of them all!"

"I deny it most utterly! I lured no man's wife to sin: I wooed a beautiful and innocent maiden to be mine, by the holiest ties!" said Roodspere, with vehemence, though he certainly was greatly startled. "And so this also is known?—to you only, or to all my foes?"

"To Sancgraal, be assured! And the knowledge drove him on measures which have for ever placed Lily-Virgin out of your reach, and in his own absolute power and disposal! What that means, I am here to tell you, if you doubt!" continued Dan Gloria,

with a bitter effusion of the double-dyed passion that doubtless accompanied the amorous frenzy holding sway in her breast. "But I am the sole witness," she continued, "of that and of the worst part of the charges that can be brought against you! And again, I repeat that, on the contrary, I am prepared to substantiate every accusation against your enemy, which, without mine own utter betrayal and disgrace, may be affirmed! All that Cromwel would have the Dalilah of the Roman camp declare, I will! And thereby shall your adversary be cast for ever in the dust—yourself become abbot of this most powerful and wealthy monastery! And I will put me into devotion for the remainder of my time, to satisfy your loving care for my soul! become Anchoress of Westminster, whose cell has been so long unfilled—anything, so that only I may live under your looks, and put my parched lips at times to the silver buckets in which you draw up the waters of salvation from their unknown depths! Choose whether you will have me your own or your enemy's, wholly! If yours, you have but to give me protection and shelter until you are called upon for your defence, which can only safely be your accuser's condemnation!"

"Do what thou wilt, for the love of truth—for the love of thine own salvation—but not for the love of me!" exclaimed Roodspere, in reply. "There needed but this treason to your treachery itself, to complete the measure of your crimes, and of my abhorrence! I will enter into no terms, of whatsoever sort, with you."

"Judge then, what cause I have to keep faithful falsehood with this man!" returned Dan Gloria, speaking with extraordinary velocity, and yet with the most perfect distinctness. "You have sobered me, master clerk, I am neither raving nor ebriac now—and I will tell you truly what claims upon my loving fidelity this man hath! Yet, how can I make it clear to a holy priest, who woos only to wed!—how the monk lured me, step by step, from the shallows into the depths—from the depths into the abyss!—I was the wife of an old and harsh man, who filled my soul with religious doubts and dismay. I sought for comfort and counsel at the feet of one, whom all men deemed, myself the most, a saint of God, replenished with spiritual wisdom as amply as the sun with light. He was a wizard surely, and trammelled me with spells. I loved him not—I never loved him! And

surely he was of as fearsome a form as the serpent that had the like glosing tongue of old. How then did he win me? We fall from such precipices slowly, yet heed not the gliding course of the descent! for I was not so easily won as perchance you deem, master visitor! I had my soul's whiteness to lose, then, which now is as a scrivener's blotting-paper—and temptation wooed me not then in a shape of light! By suggestion and prompting he won from me the secret of my trouble—of my husband's heresies: thenceforth, we were both in his power. Let be, let be! it were too tedious a tale to relate by what artifices I was won to guilt! But how the ravening jealous fire is kindled and glows in the heart, I have but too well learned! and Hunne, my husband, jealousied, doubtless, of me. Alack, not without a cause!

"No more of that!—An infant bud of hope and innocence was given to me; and that affluence of a most pure and holy joy did nigh restore me to the peace I had deemed for ever lost. But Sancgraal would not have it so! He felt, or feigned, such love and fond hankerings after my child, that at last tidings thereof came to Marchant Hunne—to this hour I wot not well how! Did the monk but deem it

was the talisman that bound me to his guilty love, or can Sancgraal, too, cherish in his stony breast some well of natural sentiment? But ever he would have me bring my sweet babe to his arms; and, yes, I have seen his tears descend like a gentle dew upon its sleeping face!—How we were betrayed, I know not. There was one Hagar, Hunne's daughter, who hated, and perchance watched me—a bitter one she was, that killed my innocent with her Herod looks when I deserted it! Hunne tracked me on a day to the Hermitage of St. Wulfin, and there—what matters to remember? I deserved, but could not endure my scorn! I returned insult with defiance—maltreatment with resistance. Hunne tore my child from my arms, and left me, maddened with blows and injuries, with one who, contrariwise, offered me all that devoted love can promise from his exhaustless treasury! I fled where only I could be secure from my husband's claims, thinking that remorseless cruelty was not in humanity to keep from a mother's arms her tender suckling of a month! But it was in Hunne! And then I would have returned, at any peril and ignominy, to his house, but Sancgraal would not suffer it, and my child—my child perished! It was mine

at least, merciless old man!—Marvel ye then how we pushed on the suit of the mortuary, misleading avaricious Gislebert that it was but to maintain the Abbey's rights? Yet my babe's tiny limbs were never swathed in the decent linen bands which should have wrapped them from the worms! The cruel old man cast it to wither, naked as a rosebud torn from the bush in a bitter wind!—If not love for Sancgraal, revenge for my child, glowed like a madness in my brain! Yes, I consented to accuse Hunne of his heresies before the Consistory of London. I pointed out where his books and writings were concealed. He was seized and consigned to the prison of the Gatehouse—and not till then did we discover he was possessed of facts and inklings which, fitly urged—and he openly protested his intention of making his accusations before the Cardinal himself, who was to sit in judgment on the cause—could but have resulted in our public condemnation! Gislebert, who perchance suspected somewhat, learned thus much in his private inquisition into the furious old man's reclamations against his pupil! He questioned Sancgraal—who denied all, and promised most clearly to prove his innocence of the accusation! But it needed not: the

churning of Hunne's own thoughts foamed away all patience in his breast, and that night —he slew himself!

"You have heard the rest, no doubt, and how Gislebert was imprisoned on the charge of murder—falsely, most certainly! During which while we had such a time in Westminster as King Belshazzar hath of it in the tapestry of Rheims! — Mirth and revel all around, and the livid writing on the wall!— But the treasurer made his submission, and returned to govern the Abbey, with all his old gloom and rigour tenfold increased. What he suspected I know not, but he ordered my shameful dismissal from the Sanctuary, and compelled his pupil also to depart, pretendedly on a pilgrimage to Rome and the Holy Land, and to finish his studies in Paris and Padua. Yet we foiled the grim dotard in spite of all his pains, and I followed Sancgraal in his wanderings and voyages, in the disguise of a lay brother of his order. We had ample means of dispense and pleasure, for the treasurer had the Abbey wealth at his disposal, and cherishes the son of his patroness with the like idolatry we pay to the stone images in our churches, if it be they in no wise return our devotion!—And so we journeyed from land

to land—crossed mountains, rivers and seas—visited Rome, that is the mother of our salvation, and the sepulchre that held the Conqueror of Death within its stony jaws!—But he grew aweary of me at last, or else I dreamed 'twas so—and perchance I vexed him more than need was with my plaints!—Nay, it was so!—Yet at Damascus, when he had the plague, I alone deserted him not—I nursed him as a mother her sick babe—not such mothers as I had been, forsooth, but such as should be! Mayhap I saved his life—none other would have given water to his baked lips when they could only gasp the thing they lacked!—None other durst have listened while his delirium raved!

"We were in Italy when news came that he was made prior of this his monastery—a long while agone, 'tis now! And then began the dark game between us which ever since we have played. He persuaded me it was not possible I should accompany him home—that Gislebert would go furious—that observers, our enemies, would be sure to recognise me again, after so brief an absence. He had yet to conclude his course of the Sorbonique. He would return to Paris as speedily as he could, and recal me to him

thither—and meanwhile aged Islip could not linger long, and then he should be Abbot of Westminster, and would enthrone me as a very queen in the Sanctuary! St. Julian-of-the-Pilgrims should be turned into a palace for me!—What did he not promise, and I believe?—Meanwhile, but for safety's sake, and that he might make certain of my good estate, in all points—he would have me resume my proper garb, and enter in a certain convent of nuns on Mount Aventine, who would receive me well, and, for a liberal hire, so entreat me. I consented at last, albeit misgivingly; and became a denizen of a convent on one of the dismal hills of pine and ruined palaces that are within the walls of Rome. But I dreamed not until Sancgraal had departed for England—until I was abandoned, friendless, moneyless, and alone, in that far land—that he had shut me up in a cloister established for the reformation of evil women, who, repenting them, like the Magdalen whose name they bore, were therein secluded from their ill courses and companions and the fiend's temptings in the world! Yea, as one of them—as a very daughter of her of the Seven Hills, whom the prior's christian charity did prompt to rescue from a life of sin,

being that I was his countrywoman, discovered to him by chance—was I secluded in those dark and melancholy walls, silent and hopeless as the dungeon depths of Venice beneath the waves!

"How chanced it my heart burst not in very anguish of disdain and grief, when I discovered the truth? Because I would not die, methought, to pleasure him! Sith he had thus contrived a separation, which was to be lasting as death, I resolved that I would live to become the shadow of his life! But for this hope and resolve, the severe rules I was subjected to, the pains and penances, the despair, the shame, the ignominy I was ordained to share, and, worse than all, the overwhelming silence and solitude which were parts of our punishment, would have sufficed to madden one who like me, from earliest childhood, yearned for joy and freedom. It was long indeed ere I learned to speak the language of those about me, so as to fathom the woful secrets of my prison; but, certes, before that I had discovered I was a prisoner! Yea, sir, a prisoner! Monks and priests in all, however distant, lands understand each others' needs, and further them to their ability. But I was a prisoner, mark you, only *lest I should relapse into my sins* . . . and a generous fee

was paid by my holy and wealthy rescuer, whiles I should continue thus safely immured—as you bind up a raging lunatic, in love and kindness, not in wrath!

"Know ye what solitude is, what this was? Solitude so deep as his must needs be, who can neither utter his own thoughts, nor give an understanding ear to those of others. And, oh, to be alone with the recollections that throng and beleaguer sinful souls around! that haunt our every step like the ghosts of murdered men, blackening the very sunshine to their murderers. When at last I learned wherein and wherefore I was enmewed, I could have dashed myself to pieces, like a wild bird newly caged, against my bars. But it was in vain—in vain all my rage and my despair! They said the fiend wrought within me; that he struggled with a frenzied giant's strength to hold his prey. They said at last that I was mad, and loaded me with chains, and placed me in a black dungeon in the earth, whence my cries and ravings of despair could not be heard. And thither came the statue of a man, a black monk, whose very cowl stood rigid as ebony around his bloodless visage, to talk to me of repentance and submission to our Lady's will! I gnashed my teeth, and spat at him; but he was

a holy man, who heeded not such trifles as breaking hearts and maddening brains; and he came daily—always when the sunshine had crawled over the black floor of my dungeon, till it couched like a coiled snake in a corner—and talked to me the same dull, unchanging, idiocy. He would tell me how blessed himself and all my sisters were, in that they no longer lived—were alive, too, but yet how dead, since they knew and felt that dead they were. Sometimes when he rehearsed those grim lies to me, I would make the low black arches of the dungeon ring like the laughter of a thousand fiends, with my scorn and mirth. But his unchanged tones at last worked on me like drowsy potions on the body's fever. I listened to him at last very patiently. Certes, I had long blanks of misery, wherein I saw nothing, remembered nothing, but the cold stony eye of the Hieronymite, as he sate and prated to me. Night would come almost as soon as day to me at times. Surely my mind wandered then in some strange realms of the unknown, forgetting how time passed in the sunless shadows of those iron-ribbed walls! But then, at times, in her mercy, our sweet Lady would grant me to believe my babe was nestling once more on my

heart—and almost I could feel again its silky lips drain the love in my soul into its own!

"At length I became again what they called *sane!* I became as they were—a stock and a stone, a machine of genuflections and strange mutterings in an unknown tongue. And then it was they discovered I had a voice which, being trained, might please the delicate ears of the Italian nobles, and bring auditors and lavish alms to our choir. When he loved me, Sancgraal also made me believe he thought my merest utterance music, and he took delight in teaching me his ballads, smiling to hear how discordantly they matched in sense with anthem and antiphon. And thus it was that I did qualify me for mine office now in Westminster; but I thought not then of uses such, and sang only because I deemed—because they persuaded me—it would redeem my soul of its heavy weight, if our Lady might perchance hear me hymning her praises so musically. But this made that the nuns grew at last determined in nowise to part with me; and against my will, and as it were by main force, they made me a professed sister of their sackcloth. Time passed; years, with the slow step of ages! I also had sunk belike into the drowsy calm they called peace, when of a sudden deliverance came—

like the rainbow on the bursting of a storm!—The Lutherans entered Rome, and I was set at freedom by their swords—in the midst of a city given up to every horror of pillage and destruction! Ask not what befel me then, how I became the prize of a German soldier, whose beaten and trampled serf and slave—nay, worse, much worse!—I was compelled to be, until a wellsped culverin dashed his thick skull to pieces, and covered the armour I had laced but an hour before, with his draffy blood and brains. I saw Ritter Sampson fall, and it troubled me no more than if a savage bull had sunk, with cloven skull and wallowing tongue, beneath the butcher's stroke. Rather it joyed me well to see that I had then a chance of escape. I took his plundered gold from his tent, clothed me in the cassock of a slain singer of the pope's chapel---he I despoiled, made no complaint!---and fled.

"I passed through lands whose very name I knew not, or have forgotten; over mountains, through forests whose black shadows night cannot darken. I saw the torrents foam over the rocks which the giants of old tossed at each other when they were at mad war. But nothing affrighted me then, not even the ghostly visage of the moon looking down upon me by night

from the drifting clouds like a dead man smiling, paler yet with malice, from his shroud. I should be left speechless as were my lips choked, like a drowned mariner's, with sand, were I to tell all my toil and trouble to reach England again. The hope and resolve of vengeance supported me as with an iron staff. Will you shudder, holy clerk, when I tell you there was *murder* all that long pilgrimage within my heart?---But when I came to Westminster, when I saw him again!---how said I that I never loved him? Or was it the very madness of what you name superstition, in my soul, that I believed the tales I heard of his wondrous sainthood; of how he was raised by heaven for the redemption of the church from the Lutherans? Nevertheless I persevered until, by some foolish sleight I scarcely now remember, I forced my remembrance upon him. And when he sent for me to his hermitage, as one whose skilled pipe might well lead in an office he had long desired filled, my hand was on the knife that you have seen me wield. But what is woman's wit against such craft? He caught me in his embrace as I was about to strike, said 'Maudelyn' with the old tone upon its echo, and—and, what boots it to relate the rest? My rage and upbraidings, his soothings and protestations! He told me,

despite all semblance to the contrary, that he had never ceased to love me; that he loved me better then than ever; that the times were changed, not he. Heresy was rampant throughout all the lands of Christendom; old love and reverence for the church was gone; the monastic institutions were assailed by the cardinal himself; and men's eyes were busied only in seeking for pretexts of the evil they meditated against the shrines of the saints. He confessed that he had been for a long time abroad in Paris and Padua — but old Gislebert's suspicions so jealously watched him, he had not been able to redeem his plight to me. Yet had he never ceased to cherish the hope and purpose, and had borne the rather (false adulator!) that I should be imprisoned where I was, since he was thereby assured no other usurped his place in my love. I spared not then, which was not wise of me, to reproach him with my bitter share in the sufferings of miserable Rome---and he soon found that, cajole as he might and did, I could not be tempted to leave Wesminster again. We fell then upon the device that I should take upon me the mastership of the choir, as one sent with good recommending to him, for the

purpose, from Italy. Once more I believed—for awhile I imagined I had regained my place in the treacherous heart that feigned to open and receive me in its core! But I had soon cause of suspicion, in his long absences and frequent journeys to Clerkenwell. Ah! now you raise your eyes again, sir clerk!---I thought at first, when I had tracked his footsteps full often thither, that the jolly prioress — of whom ran an evil fame on evil lips — had caught his wandering fancy. To baffle which suspicion he told me how it was his object to win a youthful heiress, whom the cardinal pursued with his unholy passion, to his devotion, that by means of that unrighteous influence he might preserve the monastic orders. He told me she was even as simple and unregarded a hedge-side flower as the snowdrop of the spring, whose silly innocence had caught the cardinal's jaded fancy, but as the fevered drunkard sighs for a draught from the tasteless bubblings of a well. But my suspicions were roused—I saw her, and saw how fair she was. From that hour I watched him with ceaseless attention, and observed what her simplicity in nowise discerned, how his serpent passions were slowly but certainly glimmering through flowers of

the fairest seeming to their prey! You came, and I imagined her rescued—and it was but the rescue from the jackal by the eagle, to perish the nigher heaven!"

And Dan Gloria gave a low, mocking laugh, and was silent.

"Evil, but more unhappy woman!—what would you I should conclude from this drear legend?" said Roodspere, in profound compassion and sorrow.

"I would have you answer, if Sancgraal hath not deserved—if an even-handed retribution demands not—that I should be the means to bring him to doom?" said Dan Gloria with revengeful vehemence.

"Nay, the she-wolf should not rend the wolf! Leave the office to time and to me. Let Sancgraal urge what he will against me; I have uttered no doctrine I cannot defend, if need be, with my blood! How ye can answer for your deeds shall on that day also be seen, unless, meanwhile, ye both depart from Westminster, and shun the question!" he replied, with stern composure.

"Nay, dearest Roodspere! I cannot leave even this chamber without manifest risk of my life—and would you give one who loves you more dearly than existence to the cruel

mangling of that wolf whereof you speak—and when, perchance, this casing of mortality only guards me from a worse doom? I ask but leave to remain in some hidden corner of these wide chambers---in the oratory! I will not disturb you even with my tears—they shall fall as silently as the soft rain on the meadows in June! Let me but tarry in this privileged covert until the fearful snuff of the bloodhound is off my trace—or until you need my evidence; which shall be aught or anything that you would have it!" said Dan Gloria, in accents of the most supplicating humility, and yet of inebriating tenderness.

"Retire into the Sanctuary—it was made for such as thou art!" said Roodspere, turning with a shudder away.

"It were to place myself the most beyond redemption in his power! There is no spot on earth where I am safe, but here!"

"Tarry then; but I will not! We pray not to be led into temptation, but whoso leadeth himself, deservedly is by his better angel abandoned at once!" returned Roodspere, in great disorder. "Tarry here, if thou wilt, but I will hence!"

"Temptation!—you do not utterly abhor

me then, gracious Raphael—now that you know the worst that tongue can tell of me? Say that, and heavenly music could not sound sweeter in mine ear!" said Dan Gloria, with impassioned eagerness.

"Abhor you!—No; rather, from the deepest depth of my soul, I pity you, and would do you what kindness might by any chance lie in my scope; but I will not wilfully colleague with the powers of evil against myself. In plain words — whether thou art what thou seemest, or the fiend hath taken thy shameless beauty's form to lure me to destruction—I tell thee, 'tis in vain! I love Lily Paulet—have contracted myself to her by plights that make me, in all but man's poor sanction, her husband; and I will keep unblemished the faith I owe her to the grave! No particle of all my soul—of all my nobler nature ever could be thine: but think not that I will expose the baser fuel of humanity to the black flame of the passions, whose cause too well thy dangerous lips can plead!—therefore, thou hideous syren — for I see the corpses rottening among thy flowers—I will hence, and return only for judgment from him to whom on earth my appeal is made!"

"Tarry, tarry! Nay, nay, you shall not

leave me thus," ejaculated Dan Gloria, traversing the chamber with wild eagerness while Roodspere vainly attempted, in his agitation, to remove the fastening of the door. "Tarry! —I will return to my rat-hole in the church. If you go hence you are lost, without advantage to me, for I could but starve, imprisoned friendless here! Why, it is something even to affright thee thus! Oh, well I see, divine clerk, I am not hated all! But I will hence, I swear it, by all the love I bear thee, and will, to my doom, whatever it be!—by the holiness you preach and practice!—if only thou wilt promise to place a crust of bread and a pitcher of water every midnight at your window! It is but prison fare, kind clerk, and would you grudge it me? I will not enter again, by any oath you would have me swear, unless you need me—would tell me what my testimony should be—and therefore yourself leave it open for my entrance."

"Are you a sorceress, then? Do you come by the air?" said Roodspere, and, truth to say, with a strong tinge of superstitious dread.

"I enter by the leads of the cloister, which may be easily traversed to my hiding place in the church! --- Cease, I beseech you, from your flight!--- Do you promise

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me this miserable victualling awhile, until I can spy some opportunity for safe evasion from the abbey?" returned Dan Gloria, and now in tones nigh suffocated with sobs.

"I promise it most faithfully, should I myself starve to banquet you! And dare you to take refuge in the hermitage?" said Roodspere, with some, and perhaps too visible an emotion of pity and alarm.

"There are miracle-holes in the church, where Sancgraal would not dare to find me! But do you counsel me to put myself in the crocodile's very jaws?—I will not trust you with the secret of my lurking place! If I bear witness in your favour, it shall be of my own free will and obligation," replied Dan Gloria, bitterly. "Yet it may well be," she continued melting into a flood of tears infinitely more dangerous than her irony and reproach. "It may well be. I bid you now farewell for ever! And shall it be as foes?"

She moved with slow steps, as she spoke, towards the window, whose green lattice-work no longer, or but slightly, obstructed the flow of the moonlight into the chamber. She paused as she reached this window, and looked back.

"Surely no—not as foes!" said Roodspere, approaching though with reluctance, conscious

of something at once ridiculous and dreadful, and too much acknowledging, in his hesitation. But he started back from the bewildering glance that suddenly flashed into his own—from the arms that would have circled him in their courtesan embrace more dangerously than in the serpent's coil. "Get thee behind me, Satan!" he murmured, breathlessly, and retired to his former position. "Yes, let us part as foes, since of all virtue and goodness foe thou art!"

"So be it, then! I will hence to the company of the marble kings!—remain in thine own, which is colder still," said Dan Gloria, turning away with a delirious laugh, wherein scorn and hatred mingled with a dread chaos of opposite and contending passions. And while Roodspere still stood rooted to the spot, she stepped hurriedly from the open window, but apparently on firm footing without. Recovering from his stupefaction, after a pause, Roodspere hastened thither, pushed the ivy aside, and looked forth. He perceived what he had scarcely before noticed, that his window opened on the leaden roof of the cloisters, and that it was easy to traverse their whole circuit along it. He observed a shadow glide round the walls, visible in the strong moon-

light, of his own and the opposite angle, until suddenly it disappeared where a mountain of architecture, towering in front, marked the locality of the church. But where or how the guilty phantom disappeared, he could only wonderingly conjecture.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ISLIP'S CHAPEL.

ANNE.— Verily,
I swear, tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perked up in a glistering grief,
And wear a golden sorrow.

K. HENRY VIII.

IT was about noonday on the one following Roodspere's unwished-for interview with the offending præcentor, and he had not yet quitted his apartment. It was known in the Abbey that he had given directions to have his meals served thenceforth in his private chamber; and lay-brother Didymus—a sharp observer, who carried him his morning repast—reported that he was busily engaged in writing. It was not doubted by many that he was arranging either the charges against the monks, or elaborating his own defence in contradiction of theirs—and several would have given their quarter's charity-pence to

have looked over his shoulder at the work. Nevertheless Roodspere was engaged, heart and soul, in a very different task—in penning an epistle to his new patroness, Anne Boleyn. Her position in the queen's palace, he had reflected, might very probably give her access to Lily-Virgin, who had been transferred thither from her convent; and the hope had visited him that he might, by her interposition, acquire some explanation of the singular conduct of his betrothed in coming to the Abbey, as it seemed, purposely to consign herself into the hands of their mutual enemies. To obtain this favour he felt it would be necessary to reveal the whole story of their loves; and confiding in the maid of honour's warm and generous feelings, and evident leaning to his cause, Roodspere penned that simple and unvarnished, but extremely pathetic narrative, which is among one of the most important *pièces vérificatives* of our own, intending to seek George Boleyn's friendly aid in delivering it to Mistress Anne.

He was drawing to a conclusion with this task when a knock at the door startled him. But permission to enter admitted a young monk, one Dan Eglamour, whom he had for sometime reckoned among his warmest adhe-

rents. Roodspere apprehended at first this disciple had come to give him warning of some evil device of the brotherhood against him. But Dan Eglamour merely brought word that a lady was asking for him in the church, desiring, as she said, to speak with him in a spiritual capacity. Several of the monks, including Almoner Benson, had declined delivering the message, when Dan Eglamour accepted it. And thereupon, the young monk added with a smile, the lady—who was closely hooded and mantled—gave him privately a *marigold* to accompany her request; a sign, she said, the visitor would understand as an assurance she did not come to waste his time frivolously. Up to this statement, Roodspere had been inclined to send a positive denial; but the instant he saw the flower, he started up, snatched his epistle, thanked the messenger, locked his door, and hastened into the church.

The visitor found his visitant, as he was directed, in the choir, kneeling in either affected or real devotion, before a grotesque carving of St. Dunstan clenching the devil's nose in his irons, which then graced a niche on the last pillar of the south cross. Although this devotee was enveloped from head to foot in a hood and

mantle of dark green silk, flowered with golden vineleaves, Roodspere instantly recognised, with a flush of gratitude and hope, the rich contour of Anne Boleyn's person. Yet he was disturbed to see her in what he considered an attitude of idolatrous homage—and he ventured to express the sentiment even in the respectful and joyful salutation with which he greeted her. Luckily the church was nearly empty—nones, or noonday devotion, being some time concluded. "Nay, sir, as you see—and shall better understand—I light no candle to Messire with the horns yonder! I come rather, if it may be, to take his nose in a deft pair of forceps also!" replied Anne, with much of the gaiety and sprightliness habitual to her temperament, almost always afloat on the light gases of imagination. "But lead me where the longest pair of ears in this Abbey cannot reach, for I have matter of infinite moment and privacy to discuss with you! What is the matter, fair clerk?—you dare trust yourself, I hope, even with a damsel so belied-of as she that speaks?"

"Glorious lady!—but, mine enemies' accusations are not all unfounded. I have renounced and repudiated the confessional from the hour

I learned its mischievous agencies!" replied Roodspere.

"Speak low, if you speak thus! Was that in Clerkenwell—doth the monks' little book speak sooth?" replied Anne, with a smile. "We will confess to one another then, after old Christian fashion, as they say—I'll warrant it proves a love-feast, in talk, at least!—which of your confessionals hold ye least furnished with Dionysius's air-holes?"

Roodspere reflected. A vague recollection of Dan Gloria's assertion, that she should find a secure covert in the church, suggested to him Anne's precaution might not be uncalled for. But he recollected a spot which, from its position, he doubted not must be secure from all danger on the score indicated; and requesting the lady to follow him, he proceeded at once to the chapel called Islip's. He knew that there was an oratory over this chapel, at an elevation that secured it, he thought, in conjunction with its isolated position in a corner of the building,—from all unwelcome auscultation.

Islip's Chapel is still esteemed one of the most remarkable of the "curiosities" of the church, and deservedly so, from the elaborate richness and quaintness of its ornamentation.

It was the favourite and especial work of the architectural abbot, who had taken the wise precaution to erect himself a tomb, in his lifetime, within it. This is now much dilapidated, and the slab has lost its principal decoration in the stone skeleton, wrapped in a winding-sheet, and holding in its fleshless hand a mask which was an admirable portrait of Islip, in his unwrinkled days: the whole being intended to typify his mortality and purposed resurrection. But many of the singular puns and conundrums Islip caused to be committed in the florid decorations of the walls still remain to task the ingenuity of the spectator. A boy slipping from a tree, hounds from a leash, and innumerable other hieroglyphs, were designed to inform posterity—what posterity has almost forgotten to observe, unless we have the superior fortune to jog his oblivious memory, that the founder's name was Islip! But the oratory above this chapel, whither Roodspere conducted Anne Boleyn, is no longer to be seen save on special solicitation; for what good decanal or capitular reason, it is hard to say. If these high authorities decline any longer to be showmen of the wax-work collection of effigies of departed princes and magnates, preserved from a remote period,

in presses, around the walls of the oratory, that is no reason why they should shut it up altogether. Well for Roodspere, however, it would have been had it been so in his time! He was not aware of the existence of those secret cupboards, and knew not that the panels of carved chesnut-wood lining the walls, were sliding ones, contrived as receptacles for these relics of royal funereal pomp. He knew only that the oratory was furnished with the proper garniture of one, and also as a species of state confessional, for the ease and convenience of penitents of dignity, or of the monks themselves when their abbot held what might be considered a court-baron of the consciences held in fief under his paramounce.

A flight of stone steps, turning abruptly, led to this chamber; and, thither ascending, implicitly followed by Anne Boleyn, Roodspere closed the massive door, with its brazen rivets, after them. But he invited her to assume the confessor's chair, of the finest black ebony; which she did with a smile, while he himself took up a position at some respectful distance, with his back to the curiously-painted window, that, divided into an infinitude of geometrical forms, excluded rather than admitted the light.

"And now for our mutual confession, Master

Roodspere. But I would not have you kneel to me, which is perchance your manner of confession elsewhere," said Anne, speaking in a tone of great anxiety, yet with characteristic animation. "Let us break the ice at once, then, and go afloat. I have perused the items of the monks' charges against you, and I do find myself as infinite a heretic, in all respects, as yourself, saving that I have not formed the incredibly infamous project of *marrying* a novice of Clerkenwell. Fie, sire priest! how came you ever to imagine so fond a departure from the established forms, having the poor girl, too, so meekly at your mercy, sith she loves you, herself confesseth, in return! Yet am I guilty of nigh as great offence, presuming to repay the love of one whom the great cardinal hath violently plighted to another!—I would he were, with all his myrmidons, at the bottom of the red sea of martyrs' blood they have shed!"

"You speak, indeed, lady, of a wicked Pharoah—yet I must needs remember also, of my sire," replied Roodspere, with a deep sigh.

"I knew it was so! I knew it was a monkish lie they had told her, to deny it! Why, there needs no other warrantry than your Wolsey visage, albeit marvellously more honestly

favoured. And there is all you say and do to the boot, to show you incapable of such vileness!" said Anne, with vehemence. "And so I swore—yea, in good faith I swore, and by no scented, gentlewoman oath—to the poor weeping soul, when she should tell me she had learned you were in a conspiracy to betray her—and, to crown your baseness, were not Wolsey's unlawful issue, but, good heaven, her own sire's!—Secretary Gardiner, she said—a man who is indeed thoroughly bosomed in his grace's honest secrets—did to herself aver that you were always held and reputed in your village to be Sir Amias Paulet's son—but disowned by him out of jealousy and rage for your mother's preference of the sprightly vicar whom he therefore afterwards placed in the stocks! Wolsey's kindness to you, he said, was solely on her account—his neglects and contumelies were on the Paulet side! How say you? Could malice and monkcraft devise a crueller engine to unlift a mind than this?"

Roodspere made no reply. It was impossible! He stood absolutely bereft of the power of utterance before the astounding nature of this revelation. But the whole mystery of Lily-Virgin's conduct was now too well explained. The only answer he could make was

to produce the letter he had lately finished, and hand it himself to her for whose perusal it had been intended.

Anne read it aloud, and with the most vivid interest, though at times her voice grew low and almost inarticulate with emotion. "The scarlet traitor! can it be possible *he* set Gardiner on this foul scandal, or did his own rancorous heart devise it, to serve his master's lusts, and deprive the poor girl of her sole protection?" she exclaimed. "But heaven be praised! I can take her back your disproofs—we are already on fair speaking terms—and she is so nigh maddened with this prodigious invention, that she is else in manifest danger of falling completely into the monks' snares! The Queen supports them, who hath so venerated a name and sorrowful a vision of the world that, to hear her, myself could have half believed it good to betake me to a nunnery, out of all their ways—our noble king's to the boot, whose savageness daunts even my laughing devil at times. But if you will listen to me, I will show how I purpose to make my escape, at a less exchange for the worse; and may therein include yours and your fair betrothed's redemption too—Hist, did you not hear some

stir?" Anne abruptly concluded, turning towards the wainscot behind her chair. But Roodspere was too absorbed in his own despairing and dismal cogitations to have noticed what the readier sense of Anne Boleyn indistinctly apprehended; and his assurances of the impossibility of anyone but themselves being nigh, quieted her apprehension.

The conversation was resumed. It is not necessary we should repeat it in its details; but the substance was of the deepest interest to both parties. Anne stated that the array of charges contained in the libellus of the monks was of the most formidable description, and was professed to be supported by witnesses innumerable. But the accusation concerning Lily-Virgin had stirred her curiosity chiefly, in connexion with the scene in the abbey on the day of the feast. The youthful novice was lodged in the apartment of the maids of honour, and she had easily found an opportunity to converse with her when she was released from an interview with the queen, which lasted nearly the whole time of the cockfight. It was clear that Anne cherished no very vehement liking for her grave and now peculiarly austere mistress, and she took care to let Roodspere know her majesty had

occupied the whole audience with an harangue whose object was to convince Lily-Virgin of the criminality and heresies of her lover-confessor—of the dangers that beset her in the world, and from Wolsey's libidinous pursuit—and the infinitely preferable holiness and tranquillity of a recluse life. The pious princess had even extorted from the poor girl an affrighted assurance that if she could satisfy her mind on one point, she would immediately enter the cloister. But to effect this object she declared, to the queen's astonishment and anger, she must be allowed a private interview with Wolsey himself! She would not confess to Katharine for what reason: but the keener-witted and more sympathetic maid of honour extracted that it was her simple purpose to demand from Wolsey himself the truth of Roodspere's parentage. But the queen absolutely and angrily refusing all permission of the sort—Roodspere's dismay was completed by information that Lily was ordered to receive Prior Sancgraal again as her confessor, and implicitly to comply with his instructions. There was no reason to doubt that thus she would soon be placed in possession of the accusation of heresy affixed

to his teaching, and that Gardiner's inventions would lack no support.

Yet upon this deepest darkness the light broke! Anne declared she saw no other means of safety, either for himself and his betrothed, from the machinations of their enemies, but in flight: and when Roodspere vehemently declared that no combination of dangers to himself should induce him to desert a post in which he might still be of some protection and assistance to his bewrayed love; when he pointed out what seemed the utter impossibility of effecting her rescue in the manner suggested, and pathetically implored the exertion of Anne's personal influence with the king on their behalf: she interrupted him with passionate warmth—"No, no, you are not so much your father's son as to wish me to endeavour to regain the king's favour at the price which only now I can—for heard ye not how I lost all grace at the mad tournay of chanticleers yesterday? But to understand what chanced, you must know my legend too, which now, in return for your love-tale, I will tell."

Anne accordingly related, at some length, what report and observation had already induced her auditor to surmise, regarding her position at

the court, and the causes of her hostility to the Cardinal. But she elucidated the story with particulars only herself could furnish. Almost from the first of her arrival in the court, she said, the cardinal made her the object of his unceasing illwill and spite, with no other apparent motive but the degree of kindness and distinction accorded her at once by King Henry. "And for that I would oft make him laugh when the cardinal would have him mask himself to a sadness—and made bad music to his highness's worse verses, having therein a secret motive of my own! For, also from the first, the Lord Percy and I liked of one another; and, knowing the cardinal had plighted him to his fast friend of Shrewsbury's daughter, and hated me for being of the Norfolk blood,—I thought there was no hope for us but to win the King's favour to the balance! Ah, woe is me! poor, pleasure-trimmed barque; fleeing from a Sallee rover, I have run me upon Morocco rocks! The king has taken me into his evil affection; and within these few hours hath so urged his tempest passion upon me that either I must yield me to the storm or forfeit all my hoped-for influence with him! And now, the cardinal has discovered Percy's goodwill to me, and

hath plotted how worst to destroy me, and please the king, by completing the marriage out of hand with Mary Talbot! And then, either I must submit me to the king's pleasure, or go into exile in France! How say you, that preach the pure evangile, and would marry yourself, being in holy orders, to nothing better than a woman! What shall I do?"

"Marry the man to whom your faith is plighted, and defy the worst that kings and cardinals can do!" was the reply.

"Who will marry, that wears a priest's coat, so forbidden a pair? The prior here hath already sagely refused! And know you what it is to defy a king and a cardinal?" replied Anne, with an agitated smile.

"I am a priest; and I will marry ye, for I see no lawful forbidding in your way!" replied Roodspere. "And for defiance—the cardinal at least can witness I have defied his utmost, being, that I have demanded leave to wed with Lily from himself!"

"Why then you are desperate too, and I do accept your offer—if, in return, you will accept mine!" replied Anne, with generous warmth. "It shall be so; I do discern our fortunes are as knit one with other, as if fate had dropped

the yarns, and spun them unconsciously together! My lord and I purposed not to bide the honeymoon within shot of the Tower, had it pleased Prior Sancgraal to use his cheating tongue to give us lawful right to each other's company on a voyage to Antwerp. Thither we purposed to hasten, and remain until such time as good friends might win us a safe return —at least to Alnwick in the north, where I could reign the queen of a county, in faith, more happily than our sovereign lady of the whole land of England! But for that I am already something blamed of men's free tongues, being not sufficiently hypocritical of mine own, I would be wedded to my Percy, so that no suspicion may sully our fair contract, and Wolsey and the king may know their contrary withstanding nothing avails. Wed us, and ye shall share our flight! The same barque (we have a trim Dutch carack, ready manned, that could crowd sail with the first good wind) shall bear four happy lovers out of the power of our tyrants, if by such arguments as you can furnish me withal, I can prevail upon your Lily to depart, in my company and protection. We will ship for Antwerp, where there is a thriving colony of your fugitive brethren from England, who will tie the knot between ye

right joyfully, were ye ten times priest and nun! And flight is surely now your only resource, since I cannot aid ye, and the word-fooled Defender of the Faith takes high glory to maintain the title their craft bestowed upon him!"

Liberty, love; redemption from the incalculable dangers that beset him; security—triumph—the gain of so powerful an alliance as that of the House of Northumberland to his cause; the moral considerations attached to rescuing two such lovers from the dire extremities in which they were placed—united in dispelling every other consideration from Roodspere's view. His share in the transaction might induce the cardinal—who had not shown himself, as yet, altogether destitute of natural affection—to interfere in obviating the king's vengeance, over whom his influence was still supposed to be irresistible. He might even be brought to consider the affair as the best solution of the difficulties attending Roodspere's accusation, and the rivalry Anne Boleyn had so evidently and dangerously established with his own once all-potent sway. As a lover, every possible incentive urged Roodspere's adoption of the sole means of rescue to his beloved that seemed to remain—

and to seek it, offered the completest refutation to the hideous calumnies of his enemies, regarding his relationship to Lily, and the insidious purposes alleged to lurk under his shows of a pure and hallowed love.

The rest of the interview was entirely consumed in planning the minutiæ of the daring but hopeful scheme: and it was thus arranged. Between vespers and compline, the Abbey church was usually almost entirely deserted, and, at that season of the year, involved in darkness, saving at the lighted shrines. Compline was the last of the canonical devotions, and was very scantily attended even by the monks. Observation was not, therefore, in that interim, to be much apprehended. After vespers no stranger was permitted entrance into the chapel of the shrine; but Roodspere —by Cromwel's desire, who was curious to inspect its wealth at leisure—was in possession of one of the three silver keys that admitted into it. And now it was arranged that at vespers on the following day, Percy and Anne should present themselves in the church, separately, and in the least noticeable garb. Roodspere would be at hand to conduct them into the then solitude of St. Edward's chapel, where the marriage could be solemnized with-

out suspicion. The lovers were then to retire as secretly, each to his and her proper domicile. And meanwhile every arrangement was to be made for embarcation the instant a favourable wind arose to assist the oars of the Dutch sailors. The explanations which Anne Boleyn promised to make, and a passionate epistle she allowed Roodspere to write in her tablets, neither of them doubted, would dispel the dreadful suspicions infused in Lily-Virgin, and induce her to accept Anne's offered protection, and to share in the flight. Roodspere was to be in readiness, on the earliest summons, to partake the evasion, and the wind itself would bear him the signal of departure. It was arranged that, beside the immediate parties, only George Boleyn was to be admitted into the secret, the master and crew of the Dutch barque having only a notion that they were to convey some noble pilgrims of Cologne to the farther shores.

As soon as these particulars were decided upon, Anne Boleyn, resuming her mufflers, took her departure unwilling to awaken suspicion by too long a stay. Yet not to stir it by any appearance of mystery, Roodspere and his penitent left Islip's chapel together, and parted only on the exterior of the church—and

then with an exchange of formal and ceremonious respect, intended to obviate any suspicion of the friendly intimacy and perilous alliance arrived at between them. Neither of these compelled histrions observed that the couchant figure of a man—diminished to the size of the raven with which his costume vied in hue—watched them intently from the summits of the pile, in the Hermitage of St. Wulfin.

"No, she it is not!—it is too tall and regal of port!—And do women—women like this—also make him now their resort?" soliloquised the dark observer. "But then, where has he concealed her?—She is not in the sanctuary—in the shrine—in the hollow altar of St. Mary—in the crypt—in the dark chauntry of Henry V.—in the secret confessional of the great pillar!—And do I indeed wish that she whom I tore from her husband's arms, at risks so infinite, may be concealed in this smooth talker's chamber?—Even so, he has but to turn his blue eyes heavenward, and all men will believe in a second Joseph!—A strange Potiphar indeed am I, yet, to wish 'twere so! The chamber must be searched, at whatever risk, when he is next absent. Gislebert is too long in devising his plan—and Eglamour ma-

hap will not be bribed!—He has corrupted consciences rarely indeed!—But meanwhile what was this tedious business with the court dame, in Islip's oratory? Can it be the Lutheran Anne, bringing him an olive twig from his mewed-up love?—Some of my listeners may, perchance, have heard—I will descend and learn."

But there was no one in the church when Sancgraal found himself amid its shadowing aisles; and yet, with some vague idea that the very aspect of the place in which his antagonist had lingered so long, might suggest some inklings of his business to him, the prior ascended to Islip's oratory. A fine perfume remained there indeed, which Sancgraal recognised to be of no English distillation; and on the floor he perceived an embroidered handkerchief, wrought with an A and a B. He lifted this piece of evidence with a vulture eagerness—and as he arose from the clutch, a sudden thought darted into his mind. Closing and barring the door of the oratory, he strode to the wainscot opposite the window, pressed heavily against the panel, until it flew into a back groove, and slided away, with scarcely an effort, behind the adjacent one. A curious spectacle, and a some-

what ghastly one, presented itself—a catacomb of wax figures, arrayed in royal robes, adorned with crowns and sceptres, set with mock jewellery, and other rich ornaments. Most of them, yellow or colourless with antiquity—but very precious remains of it had they been properly appreciated, for the effigies placed on funeral cars were usually casts from the actual visages of the deceased, and answered, in all other respects, to their living presentments. Kings, anterior to Henry III., and that monarch himself, graced this first compartment, but not the figure Sancgraal sought; and he closed it with a laugh of bitter mockery and disdain of the frightful grandeur exhibited in these cupboards of death. "But it is well," he muttered; "it is well!—we captives of this vasty dungeon of the church may yet derive some consolation from this grisly companionship! Kings end where we are always—in nothingness!"

He drew back the second compartment, thus musing—and gazed for a moment with incredulous doubt at what he beheld. A figure, chalkily pale, wearing the worm-eaten robes, the crown, and sceptre of Edward the Confessor, and rigid as a mummy, was before him, in whose visage he yet immediately

recognised the features of Dan Gloria! And while he gazed in stedfast amazement, the deathly countenance gradually suffused—the eyes opened—the arm moved, and the hand groped in the breast—the whole figure became animate—and, on a sudden, leaped from its dusty shelf into the oratory!

"I sought you, Maudelyn," said the prior after a long pause—less of surprise than of some darker emotion that worked within his swelling and knotting brows.

"You have found me then — and well armed, against all other pursuits!" replied the chorister, with a dismal irony that wreathed in a contortion meant for a smile all over her visage.

"What is your purpose in remaining in Westminster? Are you not satisfied with the ruin you have already brought upon me?" said Sancgraal, and there was something dreadful as the echoes of a tomb in his tones.

"Our Lady inspired me to remain, and thus concealed—though I purposed only to abide until your wrath was something calmed, that I might explain the causes of what, doubtless, seems to you a formed plan of treachery, prior!" returned Dan Gloria, with strange

composure. "Be it known to you then, that I love Raphael Roodspere! love him, hearken-well! so as I have never loved before! so as only glorious spirits, as gloriously shrined, are loved, are worshipped, by women who have eyes to discern the grander beauty of the soul even through the body's noblest excellence! Approach if thou wilt, I fear thee not! Violence never shall remove my detested shadow from your light; but if it please you to use milder spells, which I will put in your sway, not only will I hence, and for ever, in a brief while, but with me shall depart the eclipse that has blackened you so long, and you shall be left at full freedom to complete your vulture purposes on the white ringdove you have so long hovered over! Never protest! I know your designs as well as the fiend that prompts them—and I have confessed openly that my faithlessness equals or passes thine!"

"And did our Lady keep you in Westminster to tell me this?—She is but a grimly negress, her we have within, 'tis true; yet something I misdoubt this oracle came not even from her wooden lips!" replied Sancgraal, in a voice that grated like a grounding ship on the sands.

"Listen then, to what I have heard—and believe!" returned Dan Gloria.

We need not repeat the almost literal and verbatim report Dan Gloria now gave to her terrible accomplice of the whole interview that had taken place between Roodspere and Anne Boleyn. And the black, but almost silent delirium of Sancgraal's joy in the discovery, yielded few salient expressions for the chronicler's pen. But the conclusions to which, meanwhile, he passed, in his rapid and fecundating mind, surprised even Dan Gloria. "There is more in this than the ruin of a paltry schismatic of Luther's—or his compelled flight, shared by Maudelyn Hunne—since thou wilt have it so!" he exclaimed, in low, hoarse accents. "The cardinal, the cardinal! The very fortress of assault against us shall be battered down!—The king loves this pestilent, heretic woman, loves her to a frenzy! She abhors the cardinal, and he her! The cardinal's bastard—his chosen vicar and servant and instrument—is pledged to wed her clandestinely to the Percy! What hinders, but that Henry may be brought to believe the cardinal himself is secretly at the bottom of the plot, to remove his enemy from the royal presence and liking—to win Northumberland and

Norfolk alike to his devotion, and thus make himself mighty as the jealous king himself in the realm? Henry will never believe that for the sake of a puling girl—or on any assurance by the cardinal's—on any less command than his, this visitor of ours, under ban already, would dare undertake an emprise of such weight, against his known and declared pleasure and will!—All else shall be as you would have it, Maudelyn! Trust me, I suspected ere you confirmed, and had already concluded to find you, when I should seek you, in this holy lad's apartment!"

A black blush visited Dan Gloria's visage, visible beneath all the overlay of unnatural colours shed from the illumined windows—blue, green, and yellow. But her only reply was, "You wrong him very utterly—if you deem—but *that* you deem not! Only when he is hopeless, can I hope!"

"Hasten now to conceal yourself in the hermitage. Gislebert must not see you again; he is gone raging wode against you!" concluded Sancgraal, after a pause. "For me, I will to the palace at once—the name of Anne Boleyn will be my passport—or, if not, this pretty handkerchief!"

"The hermitage! Sancgraal?" replied Dan

Gloria, gazing with piercing and fearful scrutiny on the dark visage before her.

"Foolish woman! dost thou think I am a leech, to delight only in wallowing in gore?—in death—in crowding the rank, overburdened earth with corpses?—in filling the sunshine with ghastly visages to fleer at me?" he replied—and there was something profoundly mournful as well as dreadful in his utterance. "But you will believe when I tell you that your flight with him can alone relieve me from my worst danger—the like that Hunne threatened me withal—in the accusation concerning yourself! And that thus only can I break the spell of his pretended virtue over Lily-Virgin, whom, since thou wilt have it so, I love—and fittingly retaliate upon him all the unutterable scandals he has cast on me!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CHAPEL OF THE KINGS.

Vespers were just over in Westminster Abbey on an eventful night, when two persons met, apparently by appointment, in the Dark Cloister. Those acquainted with the denizens of the Abbey would have recognised one by his uneven gait, to be the lame prior, Sancgraal Bigod. The other, even those most familiar with his towering personal characteristics, would scarcely have ventured to conclude was King Henry VIII. himself. Yet he it was, thus alone, and unguarded save by his own massive strength, and the huge weapon hanging at his girdle, which few but its owner could wield. And he had taken scarcely any pains to conceal his familiarly-known personalities, saving that he was wrapped in a short cloak that partially concealed the glitter of the jewellery on his breast and sleeves. His costume, minutely preserved to futurity in Holbein's portraits, in all other respects was so royally gorgeous, that

it was evident he had passed at once from the palace to the cloisters.

"Yea, monk, it is I! I trow me, few have seen me once who need reasonably play the unbelieving Thomas when they see me again," said the king, gruffly, while Sancgraal scanned his visage with a far other intent. "But never crook thy bumble-knee to the cold stones to us now. I come not to play the king with thee! How is it,—are the birds in the bush?"

"My liege, I have set scouts who will bring us timely intelligence," humbly replied the prior. "Meanwhile I fear not the traitors will slack the opportunity, for this is a stout easterly wind that is blowing now."

"Ay, troth, is it!—So they will keep their honeymoon at Antwerp, by its good aid! And this is of the heretic priest's suggestion, because so many of his fellow rebels and anabaptists live there, and to give the better colour to his secret understanding with the cardinal!" muttered Henry, listening with grim satisfaction to the sweep of the boisterous wind which rushed like a furious surge around the cloisters.

"Yet he boasted, sire, that colouring was scarcely needed!—that his disloyal father's sway over your grace was so absolute, that—"

"Ha, did he vaunt him so?—Well, Wolsey hath had reason hitherto!" interrupted Henry, with an audible grind of his strong teeth.

"But, whatever chances, your grace stands solemnly plighted never to reveal from whom you had this warning?—For else your goodness is so certain to take him into your bosom again, and he is so certain to take vengeance on all who gainsay him, the fee of my service and fidelity is likely to be the loss, not only of my succession, but present havings in the abbey!"

"Tut, monk, dost thou deem I will ever forgive the man who—yea, who with the very purpose of despiting me, for he hath ever shown himself averse to my toyings of favour with this audacious bride of ours!—thou art a monk, indeed, if thou deemest these are the kind of offences Harry Tudor pardons!" said the king.

"I am a very monk truly, my liege, and ignorant of courts and their intrigues. I thought only what should move your grace chiefly to anger in this craftily devised plot, was that thus a mighty duke and earl would become the sworn allies and servants of the Archbishop of York and Count Palatine of Durham, who, if they knit hands, might defy all supremacy

south of Humber !" deferentially suggested the prior.

"Truly, truly !—Wolsey would then be king indeed !—Good prior, mayhap my very crown stands in some thanks to your fidelity, and we will make it our own care the mitre of Westminster fits no other head than thine !—It is a good plotting one for a mightier empery, for do not think, good friend, I believe in thy monkish tale of the apparition of St. Edward to thee with this revelation !—But I know ye monks have eyes and ears in every homestead, and that ye make common cause against all bettering, and that every confessioner is your unfeed espial ! Tell me no more of St. Edward —thinking belike to lay the blame and danger of a calumnious charge against Wolsey and his visitor on your saint ! If ye fail in the proof, look ye, I will visit all the chastisement on yourselves, and make ye know what it is to set a king's heart in flames !"

"But, contrariwise, your grace will visit our enemies and traducers with a full measure of wrath?" said Sancgraal, apparently unmoved by this threat. "Yet, since your royal nature is so stirred, I do trust your highness has seen fit to comply with my abject entreaty, that you would cause the young lord to be detained on

his way? Heaven forbid our church should be polluted by violence, and mayhap bloodshed!"

"Fear thou not; I have sufficiently cared for that! Dost thou think I would have her lips profaned with the hot bridegroom's kisses?—Percy, what, Percy!—A windlestraw whom I dashed from his horse with a tap of my lance last tournay! To prefer a priest's page and running-boy to a crowned king!" muttered Henry, in his hoarse undertone.

"Love was never blinder than so, my liege," said the prior. "Yet I do suppose Mistress Anne cradles your high majesty with as sweet lullabies as the crafty cardinal himself?"

"Nay she doth not even deign to cheat me, monk! But yesternight she sent me a written 'No,' which could not by any sleight be conjured into standing for a woman's nought," replied Henry gloomily; and suddenly firing at the artfully suggested idea, he exclaimed,—"But saidst thou, *love*? No, monk, no! She is in love with Northumberland's broad meads and manors, not with his faint boy! It is not in her warm rich blood to prefer a paltry page to us! But she deems Alnwick and Tyne a fairer portion to enjoy all her days, than the broad realm of England during its king's liking. An I thought otherwise!—but here comes one

who will tell you how our bridegroom is disposed of, for one while, at least."

A third party now joined the king and the prior, who proved to be the Duke of Suffolk. This nobleman made not an instant's delay in informing his impatient master of the success of a mission with which it appeared he had been charged. He was just arrived from York Place, where he had been to command the cardinal, on peril of the king's utmost displeasure, to put the Lord Percy under restraint, and not to suffer him to leave his palace on whatsoever pretext. "But I doubt not, my lord," subjoined Sancgraal, "his grace put an ignorant face on the matter, and feigned to know of no sudden cause for this durance!"

"Nay, sir, he trembled and quaked, like the tree Judas hung him on, in a strong wind! But yet, it is true, he feigned a most absolute ignorance, and questioned me so peevishly of the cause, that at last I was fain to tell his grace he asked the road he knew the best of us all!—And so left him in a mighty fume and dudgeon of surprise!" said Suffolk.

"You see, prior, there is no danger of sacrilege *now* in your church—lead us on then at once!" exclaimed Henry.

"Nay, sir, that were ill-fowling, to draw the nets before the birds alight! The cardinal will else deny all, my liege—and there is no fear, if false speaking can cover false doing, but he will prove truth a liar—unless your offended majesty can bide patiently until I can set before your eyes the reality of this great treason plotted between the cardinal and his bastard!" said Sancgraal. Yet he also awaited with intense anxiety and expectation the desired summons; and more than shared the king's eagerness when Father Gislebert arrived, in spite of his infirmities, noiselessly as a black shadow in the cloister.

"They are in the Chapel of the Kings, sire, all!—and await but the Lord Percy, to complete their blasphemous and heretical union!" whispered the old man, his whole frame quivering as well as his palsied head with excitement. "Mistress Anne and her brother, and the Lutheran Cambridge priest, are all within, awaiting the bridegroom only!"

"Lead on, monks!—I long more to be among them than ever I did to see my cross-bow scatter a covey of partridges!" said Henry, with a savage under-laugh.

"But your grace must steal even as quietly

upon them squatting, if you would hit the silver-breasted one!" said Sancgraal.

"Ha!—I'll warrant me, saint as thou mayst be, thou art the hawk to make a meal of a ringdove in a sly covert!" said Henry—and Gislebert alone started. "Lead on; I can tread softlier than death upon his bony feet, yet he comes unawares, they say, on most men!"

Sancgraal accordingly led the way from the Dark Cloister into the Great Cloister; where all, save for the furious gusts of wind, was utterly silent and dark. The cedar of Lebanon stretched its black branches in hard and serrated shadows, resisting every violence of the gale, as they passed beneath it, arriving before a massive door in the northwalk. This was usually secured by every resource of the blacksmith's art, but was now purposely left ajar; and by it they entered into the church. Silence reigned also apparently throughout the vast area within, and only the faint lustre of the perpetual lamps on the shrine illumined the darkness, and guided the steps of the explorers towards their destination.

They approached on tiptoe to the usual adit from the ambulatory; and Henry, making a signal to his followers, stepped up the stairs

alone. Had they been forewarned of this dread approach, the inmates of the Chapel of the Kings could hardly have been in more anxious and dispirited mood than they already were. Anne Boleyn had already become indignant and amazed at the protracted non-arrival of her bridegroom, and even to form a conjecture the most irritating to her pride and high spirit, in the notion that her fainthearted lover had taken fright at the magnitude of the peril involved, and receded from his undertaking. Her brother, George, very naturally shared this emotion, and had no reason to look forward with very cheerful anticipations to the personal results of the adventure to himself. But more than either, Roodspere was the prey of perplexity and anxiety. No sooner, in fact, had he assented to Anne's project of escape, than a new series of agitating thoughts assailed him. Was it not an act of desertion almost as condemnatory of his cause as Bilney's apostasy, thus to fly even from the unequal and partial field to which he was challenged? What would become of the infant church he reasonably believed he had founded within the very walls of the monkish stronghold of Westminster? Was it not in reality necessary that he should assert the truth of his cause by

openly maintaining, and, if need were, perishing for it? Were they sophistries of passion, or arguments of reason, that had persuaded him to the contrary? Yet, all these tormenting suggestions vanished in the too certain cause of disquietude Anne Boleyn was obliged to communicate on her arrival. Lily-Virgin was secluded in the queen's private apartment, and access to her was refused to Anne in a manner arguing that her royal mistress's suspicions were either awakened regarding her charge, or that the occurrences at the cock-fight had been reported in a way to complete her disgrace with her. Roodspere was but little comforted by Anne's warm assurances that, in spite of all, she would soon find a means to accomplish what she had promised. An extreme despondency sunk upon him, that prepared him but ill for the stormy scene to ensue.

Ascending the steps of the shrine, and tapping cautiously at the door, Henry smiled ferociously at the eagerness with which those in the chapel announced the circumstance to each other, and one hastened to open it. An exclamation was audible from Anne. "He is there, he is there! I knew yet he would not fail me, for life or death!" It was Roodspere

who opened the door. The lamps burning on the shrine dispelled only the darkness immediately around it, though a shadowy glimmer rested on the costly tombs of the kings enclosing the platform of the chapel. But no obscurity could suffice to confound the colossal proportions of Henry VIII. with those of his young rival, and Roodspere retreated in panic-stricken amazement before him, pronouncing the terrible words, "It is the king!" "Yes, traitor and heretic priest, it is I, Henry, the king!" shouted the monarch, striding like a victor into some conquered city, over the threshold. "So, what have we all here besides?—cry you mercy, madam, if we break some authorised devotion—we wot well you are not too much given to the service of the saints!—Ho, worshipful Master Boleyn, what do you here!" Are you so out of suits in ladies' favour that you have none to play servant to but your sister, Mistress Anne?—Howbeit, merrily met all in a cage, my nightingales!" and he concluded with a short, checked, but extravagant burst of laughter.

"Alack, alack, I am betrayed! The false bastard of the cardinal has betrayed me!" exclaimed Anne, clasping her hands and wringing them in despair.

"Lady, I am true, whoso is false!—Can you doubt me knowing what stake I have in the issue?" said Roodspere.

"Yea, thou art true enough to thy treason-rebel Lollard! Or rather to the false priest, thy father's treason!—and, therefore, if thou 'scape the flames, the block shall reward thy fidelity!" said Henry, furiously continuing his advance—while Roodspere threw himself on his knees in the way, about as prudently as if in that of a goring bull. "My gracious prince! how have I offended traitorously?" He had hardly uttered the words, ere he was swept aside by the mere force of Henry's progress, for he considered him doubtless altogether beneath his violence, or some lingering reverence for his cloth restrained it.

"Lousel priest! dost thou dare to make question with me, knowing well thou art here, at thy traitor sire's command, to wed this insolent handmaiden to one I have solemnly precontracted to another?" returned Henry. "Hold thy peace, rogue; thine accomplices here will not dare to deny it to my beard!"

"By the cardinal's command! — Most gracious prince, not so!—His tyranny has compelled us to this!" murmured Anne, shrinking affrightedly from the terrific person-

age that now approached her, and before whom she finally sunk, in her dismay, almost prostrate.

"Why, Mistress Anne!—Mistress Anne, the nut-brown maid!" said Henry, glaring like a hound over an exhausted doe. "Whom didst thou look for so comely that we startle thee like the devil in person? So, what, fashion's very mirrors, both, wherein she shines the more!—what do ye here in these simple garbs? Is Venus turned milkmaid, and Apollo a waggoner? You must take his wain from skyey Charles, so, Master Boleyn!—What is your petition, good damsel? Why dost thou kneel to us?"

"For mercy, my sovereign lord! If in any wise I have offended you!" said Anne, in trembling tones.

"*If*!—Nay, mistress, 'tis no offence to make a king thy fool and plaything! But which hath the better game of it now, think'st, ha? Where is thy paramour, Northumberland's lily-livered boy?" returned Henry.

"Paramour! My liege, I am no paramour!" said Anne, reviving with indignation and alarm. "Your grace wots well I have refused to be a mighty king's; and 'tis not like I should debase me to be a subject's!"

"What, then, wouldst thou have cheated Mary Talbot of her husband, further to shame us with so mean a preference? Is not here the hedgeside priest should tinker you together?" exclaimed the king, literally grinding his teeth with fury. "Out on it! to make Henry thy stalking-horse to steal on such a branchless stag! But thou wouldst have decked him soon enough, belike! Well, what matters it before or after the priest's mutterings? Go with me to hunt the hart in my royal parks of Windsor this jolly October out, and at the end, myself will hand you over at the altar to your sallow boy!"

"Your grace shames yourself rather than me with this discourse!" said Anne, rising with a vehement action from her submissive attitude. "But I will not stay to have mine ears set on fire with it! I will home to my father's house at once!"

"Then hearken!—by the holy rood, your minion shall fulfil his contract with Mary Talbot instantly, or fast in the Tower until he doth!" yelled the furious king.

"Nay, sir, I know that you are a royal king; but, I would fain believe, no barbarous Turkish soldan, to order matters so unrighteously as to sever hearts firmly knit in

bonds of love, and unite others as averse!" exclaimed Anne.

"Knit!—Knit in bonds of love!" repeated the jealous tyrant, absolutely foaming at the lips with fury. "Wert thou knit by all the church's sacraments, I tell thee, Wolsey should sever them like cobwebs! He should not king it over us there at least! Or are we a madman, that have long dreamed ourself to be Henry of England? Good damsel, to whom deem you to speak?"

"To my most dread liege lord and king, to whom I owe all duty and obedience of a subject to his good and gracious prince!" returned Anne, affrighted with the king's ghastly looks, for his sanguine complexion seemed absolutely drained white. "But no more—for more I cannot pay! The duty and willing obedience of our bodies, sire, are due to our sovereign; but our affections are not ours to give, or to withhold, since they will oft bestow themselves even without our own consents!"

"Why, then, let thine be mine, and Percy take the rest!" returned the gross tyrant, with his dread laugh. "Is it a bargain, ha? But, nay, I will promise thee rather, when time serves, to pick thee a nobler and lustier spouse

than Percy, scarcely looking beyond an owl's ken in the broad daylight, to find him!"

"I thank your grace! But Heaven has given me mine own eyesight for such choice, and I have chosen the Lord Percy!—and no other shall ever find acceptance with me, were he manifold as lusty and noble as your own royal self!" returned Anne, no longer suppressing the vehement flame of indignation that arose in her heart.

"Why so!—is it so?" said Henry, gazing with irresolute fury at the beautiful speaker. But his mood suddenly changed, and to the great astonishment of the spectators, he cast himself on his knees before his arisen suppliant, and—wonder of wonders!—with tears rolling in large gouts down his cheeks, and with sobs of mingled rage and passion, he continued his stormy wooing in another strain. "Lo ye, then, my lad, and my love! I do kneel to you for mercy that never knelt to any greater than myself, save Him who dwells above us all in bliss eterne! What is this unlicked cub—this vassal Earlie's son—in compare with a royal and victorious king? Be mine, and in return I will be thy lowliest slave—call no other lady queen of my lance and heart for aye! Thou shalt be my sole love and beauteous Rosamund, and

whatsoever thou wilt of wealth, and rank, and honour, for thyself and all thy kin, shall be thine for the asking!"

"I beseech you, sire, debase not your royal person thus before your vassal—the handmaid of your royal and virtuous consort!" exclaimed Anne, in extreme dismay, wringing her hands, but not venturing on any gesture to urge her request.

"And was not Hagar the handmaid of Sarah, and did not the ancient King of Araby prefer her to his withered yokemate?" returned Henry.

"I know not! I know only he cast her forth into the desert when Sarah so willed it!" said Anne. "But, I beseech your grace, no more of this! I wot well you speak these words—have oft spoken the like—only to the intent to divert yourself, and prove me against mine enemies' unjust reports! But, to spare you henceforth the labour of asking, and myself the shame and grief of answering any such question, I desire you to take this as my eternal reply: I will rather lose my life than my honour! Your wife I cannot be, both because mine estate is too infinitely below your highness's, and because you are already most royally mated! Your mistress I will *not* be! And therefore I beseech you most

earnestly to trouble my union with the Lord Percy no more, with whom are all my desires and affections, indissolubly as light goeth with the sun and accompanies him all day into darkness!"

"And dost thou dare protest it to our living face? Ho, minion, traitress, hast thou fooled us all along with such a resolve in thy heart?" said Henry, springing on his feet, in a renewed paroxysm of rage.

"I sought but to win your royal protection against the cardinal! I swear to your grace that never—till it pleased you on a sudden to clutch me so unmanneredly in your arms, in the Antioch Chamber, and force your kisses on my unwilling lips—dreamed I you deigned to look from your sphere of the sun upon me with any but such gracious warmth as it throws on all mankind alike!" said Anne.

"False syren, thou liest!" returned the king. "When I doated on thy strains—when I drank the music of thy song—when I prisoned myself in the tedious company of my sad queen only to gaze on thee—couldst thou doubt for whose love all was?—I will have no wife at all! Wolsey shall divorce me from Katharine's clay-cold couch; but I will not wed the widow of Alençon! Thou shalt be mine only, and I will be only thine!

How say you, sweetheart, will you be mine on these conditions, and away with me to Windsor this very hour, where I will instate my new-made queen in all but the foolish rigol of sovereignty!"

"Force it is then that I must repeat!—I do utterly abhor and reject your proffers!" returned Anne, with reckless impetuosity. "Nay, more, I tell you, sire!—were it even possible for you to make my blood royal, and dower me with lands as broad as any ever your Plantagenet ancestors possessed, or your Tudor ones lacked, and so make me your equal, and fit to share your throne, were it unoccupied—I would refuse it, and rather be Percy's countess than Henry's queen!"

This declaration, which was meant to destroy any vestige of hope in Henry's breast, only roused his tyrannous passions into madness. "Is it even so?" he shouted. "Then hear me in this I swear, by holy Edward who listens!—if I win thee not, none other shall! I will set my kingdom in a blaze—reduce it again to a petty lordship in Wales—let my crown pass away to strangers, as headless Buckingham's soothsayer promised him—rather than suffer it! But why threaten I thus when thou art mine already? By fair means or foul, mine thou shalt be—mine this very night, this hour, this instant!"

He attempted as he spoke to seize the affrighted lady in his arms; but she shrunk down, eluded the clutch, and fled with a shriek of terror, towards the group which listened in utter consternation to this dialogue. But among them all, only Roodspere had the courage to step forward and interpose himself between Anne and the pursuing king.

"Sire, remember that you are a king and a knight!—that your father's ashes repose beneath these roofs!" said Roodspere, confronting the king firmly and unflinchingly, though without any gesture either of offence or defence.

"Jesu to witness!—and who art thou to cry halt to a king?" said Henry, clutching his sword from the scabbard, and waving it in a terrific flourish over his head, while Roodspere stood still and unmoved within its deadly whirl.

"Kill me, sire, you may! But else I will not cease to remind you that she whom you assail is a woman, and your subject, whom as such you are bound rather to protect with this brandished glaive!" said Roodspere.

"And, sire, my sister is the daughter of one of your most faithful servants!—niece to another whose deeds merit no such recompense!" said George Boleyn, rallying under

this advance from the paralysis of the superstitious loyalty and awe of the kingly majesty in which courtiers and populace alike were in those days trained.

"Your highness may well perceive hereby—if proof were lacking—how treason and heresy go hand in hand!" said the deep tones of Prior Sancgraal, who, with Suffolk and Gislebert, had entered the chamber for some time at the entrances from the altar.

"What, and are ye all here?" said Henry, rolling his haggard eyes around the two groups, and seeming for the first time conscious of his numerous auditory. "Well, well, George Boleyn!" he continued, with panting sighs, "take her hence—take her home to your wise sire, who can see the grass growing in France, but not how his own threshold is on fire! And tell him—tell Sir Thomas Boleyn—that for her rank disobedience and insolency, we deprive his daughter of her place near the person of our queen, banish her from the court, and bid her retire to your old house at Hever—until she shall hear further from us! What! and doth she feign to swoon, to melt our just indignation?"

But Anne Boleyn feigned not. Even her high spirit yielded when this climax of insult and disgrace was heaped upon her; and in spite

of all her brother's efforts to support her, she sunk in a deep swoon, and as it chanced, into the ancient coronation chair which then stood close to the shrine. And now—her hair dishevelled in the struggle with the king, and escaping from her coif, and her head falling back powerlessly on the regal chair—gave a true image of the terrible antithesis of her destiny!

Henry's fierce passions instantly took a new turn. "Help, our Lady! I have killed her—she is dead!" he exclaimed, and disregarding the sanctity of the altar-cup he perceived on the shrine, he snatched it, and poured some wine, it contained, into Anne's pallid lips. No one, of all those who witnessed his subsequent prodigal and almost frantic efforts to restore her to consciousness, could have doubted the ferocious sincerity of his passion. But the moment these efforts succeeded, his vindictive sentiments returned. "Bear her hence, and forget no word of your charge, George Boleyn! Suffolk, go with them and see them safely sped!" he said, and Anne arose dizzily to obey his imperious gesture. But even then, Henry had the mortification to hear her murmur, half consciously, "Where is Percy?—Oh, have ye killed him too?"

"Peace, peace, madam; he is safe enough

if your rash utterances bring him not into peril! Ye should have dreamed a nobler dream as ye slept there, on the Stone of Destiny!" whispered Suffolk, in warning tones—alluding to the block of legendary granite then as now — placed under the coronation chair.

"If he is safe, let us hence!" said Anne, with bewildered eagerness.

"Why stand ye there at debate, Suffolk?" shouted Henry, till the aisles rang again with the echoes of his formidable voice.

"And now, sire,—the cardinal's false priest and bastard! what is to be done with him?" said Sancgraal, while Suffolk and George Boleyn hurried Anne out of the chapel—who yet, as she passed Roodspere, paused as if struck by some recollection — then, overwhelmed with the consciousness of her powerlessness to render him any aid, she gave a glance of despairing anguish at him, and disappeared.

"Ah, we will pay the cardinal for his merry geste!" said Henry, with vengeful bitterness. "Keep him cooped in your prison, monk, till I have time to adjudge him to the flames! I see well he is a confirmed and matchless heretic, as well as traitor!—and we will make red embers of him, or three sunsets more light our bridegroom to his lawful Talbot couch!—

Hence with him, prior!—Ye have the place still where ye kept Marchant Hunne, I wot!"

By this time a throng of the monks, headed by the powerful sacristan, Walter Wenlock, had gathered round Roodspere. All possibility of physical resistance, even if he had been inclined to offer any, was evidently out of the question, and the visitor resigned himself, with the calmness of despair, into the hands of his enemies. Walter Wenlock appeared to have received his orders, and immediately conducted the prisoner, with a joyful and numerous attendance of the monks, from the king's presence, and the church itself, to the Gatehouse.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE GATEHOUSE.

It was a brief walk across the churchyard to the Gatehouse Prison, and Roodspere speedily found himself, still in the clutch of his captors, under the frowning shadows of its arch. The Sanctuary gate in it was closed, as was always the case after vespers, and he could not help smiling sorrowfully, remembering the little jailer's promise to himself, when he heard the sacristan, in tones hoarser than the note of any raven—much more of a woodpigeon—clamour at the iron-door in the arch admitting to the functionary's official residence, on the ground floor of the tower. And yet some delay was made ere Mugwort became aware of the arrival, and presented himself, with a visage of great alarm, to inquire the cause of the tumultuous summons. "The cursed shrew, my wife, will let me hear nothing but her bell-clapper, which is worse than thunder, and sours all the ale for a mile round about, lord sacristan!" he exclaimed, recognising the official.

"Fie on thee, rogue! I will have thee excommunicate with book and candle, for a false calumny and a liar, as thou art!" shouted Long Meg, from the depths of an apartment whose great extent and gloom, and the glow of flames in a vast chimney casting a reddening glare around—in unison with her presence—might have furnished Dante with some ideas for a compartment in his Inferno. Mugwort paid little attention to this reclamation, continuing to survey the group before him with marked anxiety, and even alarm.

"I do trust, Dan Walter," he then observed, "you have not brought me a new prisoner?"

"Ay, but I have, and this is he!—and he is to be put in the safest ward you have, Mugwort, in the top room, where Hunne was secreted from all but the devil!—And, look, on peril of thy neck, which I will else twist with mine own hand, that thou let none have access to him, whose entrance thou canst bar, unless he bring with him the lord prior's great gold cross as a sign!" replied Sacristan Wenlock, unceremoniously dragging his prisoner forward by his coif, and rudely thrusting him over the threshold of the ground-floor dungeon.

"Marry, be praised! hath he come at last, and is the good Abbey quit of the Lollard

nightmare?" vociferated Long Meg, hurriedly approaching. "Never fear, my Lord Walter—I will watch him if none other doth, like the apple of mine eye! Master visitor, you are very welcome—I trow you will have cause to study more scholarly matters now than a little drunken weasel's lies against his lawful flesh—reprehending her for the same, as an they were truths pricked out of the breviary!—and the rogue himself may take warning by what you are come to—jesting at our Lady of Westminster's miracles, and saying that she hath wheels in her head to turn her eyes!"

"Speak not thus unadvisedly against thine husband, woman, whom God hath appointed thee to love and cherish—against me, even what thou wilt!" replied Roodspere, with a patience and benignity that somewhat softened even this terrific virago.

"Well, sir, as I said, you are very welcome—more for the Abbey's sake—for I wish you no such great matter of harm neither as to die hot! Willie, gaby! bring a brand, and let us light master visitor to his chamber!" returned Long Meg.

"Bolt the doors behind us, and we will see him safely to his lodging, goodwife!" said the sacristan. "We must put his feet in the

clogs, too, that if the Old One comes for another of them he may find him in the same place!"

By this time the idiotic turnkey, who seemed yet to have sufficient sense, or instinct, for his post, arrived with a torch in the shape of a burning stick, which he took from the fire. Mugwort produced his keys; and with this strange will-o'-the-wisp, uncouthly grinning, for a guide, the whole party ascended several flights of exceedingly narrow stairs, admitting air at perforations in the shape of crosses—even the dungeon-windows of the abbey were devote! They arrived then at a door of extraordinary thickness, secured by massive bolts and a lock; which the jailer unbarring and thrusting open, they entered the fatal chamber in which Richard Hunne had met with his mysterious doom. But apart from its associations, this lofty dungeon had a peculiarly dismal and deserted aspect. It seemed as if it had not been tenanted for a long time—as if, indeed, little or nothing had been changed since the last unlucky guest abode in it. The trusses of pease-straw, covered with a coarse woollen counterpane, forming the bed, were white with mouldiness and must; the great circular chimney-place was strewed with the embers and ashes of a fire that had long died out. The

only other articles of furniture in the chamber, if they could be called such, were the iron shoes fixed in the floor, used as fetters, and a low wooden stool. And more suggestively still, a long piece of rope, broken or sawed into jags at the end, hung from a crossbeam over the roof. The barred window was unglazed, but a massive shutter, closed in one flap, and open in the other, seemed adapted to exclude exterior sounds and sights, or perhaps to confine others which it was not advisable should intrude on the public notice.

Knowing that it was in vain to resist, Roodspere, though surprised at so unnecessary a precaution, obeyed the sacristan's command without a murmur, and taking his seaton the stool, allowed his feet to be secured in the latchets of the clogs, the jailer using for the purpose a winch-key, without which scarcely the strongest wrenching-irons could have availed to set him free. No other precaution was neglected: the shutters were both closed, and similarly fastened: and no approach to luxury or comfort of any kind was permitted. Long Meg herself was rebuked for proposing to light a fire, to dispel the gloom and dampness of the chamber. "Master visitor will not shiver among us long—he hath good friends at court—and Father Gislebert orders things to be left as

usual!" was the sacristan's sinister observation. "And for his meals, we will send him his refections from the abbey table, that they may not say we starve our prisoners at least! And so good night to you, master visitor!"

Roodspere made a calm response, and the whole party withdrew, Wenlock watching the last fairly out. The captive was now left alone in total darkness—and to what a series of dismal cogitations may well be imagined! The destruction of his hopes—the irredeemable loss of Lily-Virgin—his total disgrace with the cardinal—the fury of the king—the malice of his enemies—the place in which he was immured—all combined to overwhelm him with the certainty that no earthly hope remained for him. A brief mental review of these facts—of the events of the latter few days, but above all, hours—would have sufficed to dispel any possible gleam of comforting illusion. There was no circumstance in his whole career but seemed to array itself against him, and exhort him to prepare only for misfortune and ruin! Yet in a carnal sense only! for, in the midst of all these terrors and this menacing pressure of dangers, Roodspere's clear conscience stood like an angel of light beside him, brightened the thick darkness of his dungeon, and shed a beautiful though mournful light over the tre-

mendous uncertainties of the path he had yet to tread. It even visited him with something of a sweet though dreadful serenity, when he bethought him that the catastrophe he had been wrecked upon was perhaps a heavenly answer to the tormenting doubts in his mind, as to whether he did well in fleeing from the conflict, summoned only by the spells of a human though most hallowed passion!

Absorbed in this revery, he was luckily withdrawn from any consideration of the dreadful associations of the scene of his captivity, and had not even formed the notion that it was possible some more immediate danger than the martyrdom he anticipated as the inevitable result of his position, might await him. But he was suddenly startled into some such consideration by the sound of a sharp whisper, apparently through the keyhole, which came to his ear like the whizzing of a bullet. "Master visitor, be on your guard! I doubt me Marchant Hunne's devil is coming your way, too! I am Mugwort, the jailer, but they have taken my keys from me, to the abbey, and I am ordered to go on a fool's errand into the Sanctuary—and Friar Gildas, that put the top-gallants on me that night, is coming in like manner to shrive my wife over a hoop of hippocras! Therefore I say, keep your eyes open!

Draw your feet out of the clogs, on which I did only feign to turn the screw—open your shutters—and, if they come at you, make the welkin ring with such murder-cries that they shall be afeard to do their will on you!—Sir, if you hear me, answer the Amen!"

"I hear you, good friend, and thank you! But expose not your own safety for mine! Whatever comes of it bear only this my last entreaty to the cardinal, my father who once called himself!—that he will protect ———" the name died away on the lips of the imprisoned lover, unuttered, for it occurred to him that his betrothed might very probably be in worse danger under Wolsey's protection, than even the blighting influence of Sancgraal's superstitions.

"All the saints keep you, sir! but you are in ill custody here! Would it aught profit you if I took of your news to my lord cardinal?" replied the same friendly whizz. A sudden thought occurred to Roodspere. He remembered the words dropped by the king imputing to Wolsey complicity in the plan formed for Anne Boleyn's marriage and escape. He knew his entire innocence, and it struck him that by sending the cardinal word of his situation, and that he had important explanations to offer on what was pro-

bably now Wolsey's own, he might yet derive some protection and assistance from him. He eagerly responded to the jailer by desiring him to wait his answer until he could come nearer; and finding to his great satisfaction that he had only to draw his feet to take them out of the latchets of the clogs, he hastened to the door, and in a safer whisper through the keyhole instructed Mugwert to go to York Place, request to see Master Cromwel, and deliver a message which he carefully shaped in a manner he thought would excite the secretary's attention. The little jailer warmly promised to execute the behest, but at the same time it appeared his wife called to him, for he muttered, "Ay, ay, when thou sayest 'yes,'—the devil says 'yea!'" and hurriedly renewing his cautions to the captive, he retired. Roodspere immediately hastened to the shutters, and found that he could also easily undo their bars. He did so, and admitted a rushing but refreshing wind, that flew round the chamber with the speed and violence of a watery inundation. He remained inhaling it with some satisfaction at the network of iron, gazing, as well as he could for the darkness and depth, into the churchyard of the abbey, which the window overlooked. And now suddenly the great bell rung out complins, and he knew that

it was nine o'clock. In the space of little more than a couple of hours, the destinies of half-a-dozen individuals—and of the futurity of half mankind—had taken an unchangeable impulse and turn!

The ghastly apprehensions naturally kindled by the warning he had received, and the antecedents of his dungeon, wonderfully subsided in Roodspere's mind when he beheld the open sky again, even though it shadowed a place of graves, and was so wild and clouded as the one he gazed upward to. There was the turbulence of freedom in the tempestuous whirl and roar of the wind through the ancient trees and towering masses of the Abbey, which he seemed to share even in his narrow coop. The visible skies seemed like an open presence-chamber of the Eternal, in whose sight no supplicant could kneel in vain! All was as silent and solitary in the cemetery as in his dungeon, yet he felt as if he had re-established a communion with the outer world of men and their doings. He was no longer the living tenant of a sepulchre! He even took a kind of desperate hope that Cromwel, or the Cardinal, might yet interfere efficaciously in his behalf! And he was musing over all the reasons he imagined ought to induce the latter at least to lend ear to his distress, when his

attention was caught by observing a litter, borne by four stout yeomen, with torches in their hands, enter the gate of the abbey precincts towards the palace. He recognised the royal badge and livery, in their bearers; and he was greatly struck by the circumstance, imagining it might be the queen herself come in person to ascertain the truth of rumours, it was possible, though barely, might already have reached her ears. He gazed very earnestly, with his face close to the iron bars, and he perceived the litter was borne to the north-gate—the curtains were undrawn—and two figures descended from it. The gleam of a torch fell upon these, and with a deadly throb at the heart Roodspere recognised in one a novice, in the other a Benedictine nun! They entered the church immediately, whose ponderous door opened scantily to admit them, like a monster of the deep which receives some prey when it is nigh gorged, on the flow of a wave. Both nun and novice were closely veiled; but could it be—nay, was it not almost certain—that they were Lily-Virgin and Sancgraal's harsh accomplice, or at all events, bigoted coadjutrix, Sister Barbara?

This idea restored the most terrible and hideous of his apprehensions to full dominion over Roodspere's mind. He saw that the yeomen retired with their conveyance the mo-

ment they had set down the burden. What could be the meaning of this?—In his distraction he even attempted to call to the litter-men to inquire! But the raving wind and the height dispersed the sounds—if indeed his oppressed faculties uttered any but such as sleepers strive to give vent to in a nightmare dream! And for a considable lapse of utter self-oblivion and devouring anxiety, he continued to watch the silent, black, and insensible pile before him, until his eyes glowed thick with sparkles—as if he thought he could pierce its dense walls at last with the intensity of his desire to search into their hidden mysteries! He was recalled from this useless and protracted investigation by the sound of a voice which he knew but too well, in the interior of the tower, but on the outside of the door of his dungeon—mingling with the jar of bolts that were slowly withdrawn by an unaccustomed hand—singing, apparently with great carelessness, but with even more than its wonted melodiousness, these words,—

"Sweet Dowsabelle, look from thy tower!
The sun shines fair on every flower,
But thou must shine on me,
Ere I can see the broad daylight,
For clearest sunshine's dark as night,
When I behold not thee,
Sweet Dowsabelle!

Thy father is a stately Earl,
Thy mother wears a garland of pearl,
I am but of squire's degree;
But wave that white hand from thy tower,
And I will climb, though death be dower,
High as the stars to thee,
Sweet Dowsabelle!"

Dan Gloria free—singing—visiting him in his dungeon! Was he dreaming?—was his reason altogether gone adrift?—or had her quarrel with Sancgraal, and revelations against him, been parts of some prodigious deception crowning all yet devised in those prolific brains of mischief? Yet her confession—her fury against the prior — her declaration of affection for himself! And on the previous night the food Roodspere had placed for her, by her desire, had disappeared! What was he to conclude? Was her desperate hand, which woman's as it was, was nerved by so fierce a spirit, to rid herself and her paramour of the dreaded witness of their crimes, as of yore Hunne had been removed from confrontation with them? Was it her turn now to do the deed of slaughter? — A single instant, and Roodspere formed his resolution. He flung the shutters to, resumed his seat, put his feet in the unfettering clogs, and leaning back against the wall behind, affected to close

his eyes in a profound sleep. This manœuvre was scarcely well accomplished, before the door opened, and Dan Gloria, in her usual scarlet robe of a chorister, and black hood, with a basket on her arm, and a dull horn-lantern in one hand, entered the chamber.

Roodspere noted that she paused for an instant on the threshold: he could even imagine he felt the glimmer of her expanded and fearful eyes, as she gazed round the fatal chamber. He distinctly apprehended that she gave a shudder, as if struck with a deep chill in all her veins—and that a brief hesitation checked her advance: surmounting it with an equally evident effort, she then continued her progress, carefully closing the door of the dungeon after her, in which a massive bunch of keys gave a rusty jingle; and throwing the foggy light of her lantern forward, she stood for several instants as if in astonishment. "And doth he sleep?—and here? But it is true, no spectre crosses *his* vision here! Master Roodspere, awake!—if it may be, you sleep!"

Roodspere was now satisfied no immediate personal harm was intended him, and he opened his eyes. "Who calls? I am here!" he replied quietly, and seeming to awake.

"Look not for Peter's angel!—I am none!

A Magdalene, perchance, who would not desert her blessed guide even at the bitter cross! I pray you pardon me — it is not blasphemy I speak, for to save even one soul is to be as Christ in a degree, though it be but as a drop to the ocean—and mine may yet be saved by your means!" said Dan Gloria, with a vehemence that unpleasingly recalled to Roodspere the last fearful interview between them. "But meanwhile your own gracious body is in as infinite peril—and I am come to its redemption at as great risks as ever you took on my spiritual behalf!"

"Woman," replied Roodspere, with calm sadness, "I have received great injuries, but I will receive no benefit from your hands! And methinks in this chamber you should be afraid to offer either!"

"Ay, it is a fearful place!" said Dan Gloria, glancing around with a visible shudder. "And grimly Gislebert has suffered nought to be changed since that hour!—And as he often comes hither and penances himself for days together, mayhap the murther was in truth his deed! And what were easier than now to repeat it? You are shackled in the same guise—as distant as Hunne from every human audience—with the like most urgent reasons to prevent your ever again being allowed to

enter any! On all sides you are desperate, Roodspere! The monks have seized on your papers—by this, they are in full possession of the most damning evidence of your heresies! The cardinal cannot save you if he would, for the king is made to believe he was of your complot for the marriage of Mistress Anne. But certes he would not if he could, for he must discern now how your horoscope accomplishes itself against him; and he will be made believe you have purposely involved him in your ruin by a false accusation of his complicity! I am the only witness of his innocence, for it was I who, concealed in the pannelled walls of Islip's Chapel, overheard your whole plot with Anne Boleyn!—And I do not purpose to appear in that behalf! This, and your treachery with Lily-Virgin, you cannot doubt, will overcome any weak impulse of nature on your behalf in his bosom, which at best hath only sprung in spurts, as a choked spring among sandy rocks! And thus friendless, and spiked round with enemies, are you to present yourself before the dreadful king, whom you have mortally offended, as your judge!—Your executioner rather, unless you accept the means of escape I come to offer you. Oh! flee, flee, Roodspere, from these fatal walls, where thou art like the red chalked

sheep in the pen, marked for slaughter!—Nay, it is not impossible; for, on condition that both of us depart for ever from his sight and danger—from England—Sancgraal himself consents to your escape! And thus shall you save your own life and mine, and complete the redemption of my lime-twigged soul; for your doctrines begin at last to shoot their painful roots in my spirit! You have smitten away all the false props on which I leaned, and unless you stretch your hands, I must sink into the most fathomless gulfs of despair! I am utterly aweary of the crimes and company of these possessed swine of Westminster! I would gladly be forth under the open skies again, and, whatsoever hardships and dangers might betide, would become a follower of thee and of the Gospel; if need were, in woods and in wilds, faring on cresses and water, and sleeping on rushes, beholding how thou scatteredst those seeds of light which are to yield eternal day for harvest to all who will reap thereof! And while you preach your tidings, I will chaunt the Amens until the welkin rings, and end ever the lay with a *per omnia sæcula saeculorum*, which shall make the angels, bend down to listen!—A holy jongleur and his mate we will become, and frequent fairs and all gatherings in the like

fashion ; and surely the people will pay us for our prayers as they do the pardoners and relic-mongers ! We need not stay always in foreign lands !—But meanwhile, horses, money, every necessary, is provided for our flight to Antwerp ; whereat yourself said, or agreed, is a flourishing colony of as true believers ! And were it into the fiery gulfs below, I would follow thee unflinchingly !"

"My way, I trust, lies not thither, and therefore, I need no such faithful accompanying," replied Roodspere, with extreme coldness. "Continue on the road with him in whose meet society I found you, and foolishly thinking to move you to turn back, only accelerated your steps ! He hath spells, he says, to unlock the gates of red hot adamant through which you would pass ! I have none. But not into Paradise itself methinks (Heaven pardon me !) would I enter in your polluted society !—think not to trap me in so plain a pitfall as this ! What simpleton cannot see the drift of this pretended mercy ? Sancgraal would have me hence that he may complete his blasting designs on my Lily, and establish her in the horrible belief that hath already nigh deprived her of her reasonable senses !"

"And what canst thou do to prevent his purposes by thy tarriance in destruction ?"

said Dan Gloria, with agitation. "Deem you that Sancgraal has incurred dangers so numerous — exhausted artifices, cruelty, and audacity—to be affrighted now from his triumph by the wail and threats of a captive? And little do you know of him, or of the magic powers he wields, if you deem a simple girl can resist his wiles, which minds of a high and rebellious order are trammelled in beyond redemption!—thyself also, wise doctor! And hast thou presumption to think that a magnificent and potent abbot of Westminster could not speedily banish from any woman's regrets the memory of a poor scholar who was broiled at a stake for heresy? But all the martyrs forbid that such should be thy doom! —which else must be if thou deny to take the means of rescue I offer! Yet, Raphael, to take from thee the last foolish hope, to which I know thou clingest," she continued, jealous and vindictive passion restoring all the customary wildfire to her eyes, "I tell thee, she is even now and irrevocably in the power of Prior Sancgraal! The pious queen can espy no harm in a young maiden's spending the night at the foot of the statue of our Lady of Westminster, under such holy purveyance, imploring some oracle to relieve her perplexity and anguish of doubt! Lily-Virgin is in

the Abbey even now, and alone! Even Sister Barbara has been removed from her side—sent to Clerkenwell to bid the nuns come at dawn and receive their novice into their sisterhood—for doubt thou nothing there will be a plain revelation of our Lady's will, and to that effect! Faint with long fasting, conscience-stricken, in the power of a fiend armed by her fancy with the lightnings of heaven—what miracle dost thou, who believest in none, imagine will be wrought to save thy Lily from the withering blast?"

Roodspere stood for several minutes utterly aghast and petrified with this intelligence, which what he had himself observed, too fearfully confirmed. His thoughts during that period whirled in a chaos!—a chaos, but on which suddenly an inspiration either of heaven, or of its fittest intermediate, a brave and loving heart, burst like light! It is certain, at least, that the severest of the angels could not have blamed the degree of deception he was compelled to practise. "Alone!—alone, say you, in the Abbey, with this black wizard? She is lost then indeed!" he ejaculated. "And it behoves us now to look to our own safety! —I see clearly that else I must share, in some crueller guise perchance, murdered Hunne's doom! But how is there any possibility of escape hence?"

"Listen!" exclaimed Dan Gloria, with most joyful eagerness. "Long Meg thinks I have brought you your victuals in this basket — but there is a monk's robe under these grapes instead of a poisoned capon and flask! You wot there is a tale that Sathanas visits heretics, in the Benedictine cowl, up here—it will mask an angel as well! But in addition, Friar Gildas is below, with orders to the massive jaileress, his love, to see only what he shall bid her see—and he hath it in command to wink at my departure with whom I will, from this tower! But deem not that you can play me false, Roodspere!—all the gates of the precinct are secured, and will only be opened to let us forth in company with a strong muster of the Sanctuary men, as a guard, under command of Sacristan Wenlock, who, feigning themselves Flemish traders returning home to Antwerp, will not stop till they see us faithfully there!"

"No matter—I am ready! Where do these ruffians await us?" replied Roodspere, seizing with convulsive eagerness on the garb which, for any other reason than the one prompting him, he would scarcely have put on had it been of inconsumable proof, and himself in the midst of enveloping flames. Dan Gloria, tossing the fruit in the basket on

the floor, drew from beneath a layer of vine-leaves the Benedictine robe and cowl, it appeared she had brought with her, and threw the folds over Roodspere's neck, arranging them carefully over his doctor's gown. And he shuddered to feel that she performed this office with a caressing hand, and even, as if by accident, touched his cheek with her own. But she started at the marble chill that encountered the pressure. "Alas, poor youth! he is frozen in these gyves," she exclaimed; "I will get the winch, and loosen your feet; then follow closely on my steps, making no answer to any questioner. Orders are given to allow of our free egress—but if need were, I am armed to protect us from such as will not otherwise be appeased!" And partly perhaps in menace to Roodspere himself, she drew her dagger gleaming forth, and stepped to the door, as if to get the bunch of keys, on which the winch for the clogs was also hung. Roodspere perceived he had no longer any time to lose, and the instant Dan Gloria turned her back, he drew his feet from the clogs, and followed with swift noiselessness in her steps. It was his intention to glide past her, and secure her within, while he made a resolute evasion from the prison. But light as his footsteps were, the acute

senses of Dan Gloria, sharpened to a supernatural vividness by the dreads the scene in which she found herself naturally infused, detected the sound. She turned suddenly, and a shriek burst from her lips that affrighted her pursuer's hair erect! "Mercy, Hunne!—mercy!—Sancta Maria! Roodspere, is it thou?—have the angels of heaven themselves set thee free?"

"Heaven works at times even by agencies as evil as thine! It calls me now to deliver Lily-Virgin from the trammels of thy fellow-sorcerer, at whatsoever risk!—Stir not, move not, for I *will* hence, and hence alone!" returned Roodspere, seizing Dan Gloria by her mantle in a strong grasp. "Give me way, or—or to thine own blame only will lie what unseemly violence I must use to force it. Give me way, I say! What can thy vengeance ask more? I do not fly from my murtherers. I cast myself into their middest den, to rescue my betrothed!"

"What dost thou rave, madman? And askest thou such sufferance of me?" said Dan Gloria, with the glare of a pantheress startled by the hunter in its cave. "What! and dost thou deem I have put all to the stake for thee—forfeited all other hope—even my right to vengeance, for I have confessed to Sancgraal

himself my love for thee!—have watched over thee all along more tenderly than men preserve the precious sense of sight itself!—to surrender thee now to perish for the sake of a pining, pale-faced girl, my rival? No, rather than so, with mine own hand will I shatter that stony chrysolite thou callest a heart, and unshrine her image thence, if there it is to be found!" And the half-maddened Dalilah of the siege of Rome raised her weapon, with a vindictive sparkle in the eyes, and a gesture that indicated she was fully capable and prepared to execute the deadly purpose thus denounced.

Roodspere paused. "Maudelyn Hunne!" he then said, in calm but terrible accents, without provoking by any physical manifestation the menaced outburst. "Maudelyn Hunne! look around you! Behold those fetters—that stool—that rope! Have not yourself confessed that from the hour you committed the crime which makes this dungeon a place of terror to you, no glimpse of happiness has cheered the darkness of your recollections? Have you not been abandoned, betrayed, maltreated, by him for whom you have lost all else? Have you not averred that you have no longer confidence in the false supports to which hitherto your conscience

has clung, slipping over the abyss? Why, then, by one good deed can you now balance all the evil you have done!—obtain a right to look heavenward with hope! Let me but have a free way—let me hasten to the rescue of the innocent girl whom so causelessly you hate; for never, never—had Lily-Virgin never been, her ideal would still have existed in my soul, and marred all the effect of your wicked fascinations!—never could I have regarded you with any feeling but the woeful compassion needs must be infused, beholding a noble work of the Creator so depraved from all its meant purposes and integrity! And, hearken! never will I leave this dungeon, unless now and alone, until I am dragged forth by the myrmidons of your betrayer, to share the stake of your murdered spouse! Let us try the experiment, and see which of us is firmer in his resolve. I will not tempt you to repeat thy crime, or use unmanly violence to make myself a path, but will await here, and thus, your resolve!" And folding his arms immediately before Dan Gloria, whose uplifted weapon still seemed eager to drink his blood; and gazing at her with sorrowful but fixed determination, he did not even retreat a step, while her arm slowly

descended, as if weighed down by some ponderous bulk attached to it.

"And Sancgraal said this man could not love! Oh, but this is love indeed!" she murmured at last, in faint, awe-stricken tones. "Go then!—I yield! Thou goest to destruction, but it is in a meet and holy cause! Yea, thou wilt find Sancgraal alone with his unhappy penitent, before the altar of St. Mary! Take this weapon! Heed not the sanctity of the place! The fume of such blood is a pleasing sacrifice to the saints—and strike as deeply as the innermost spring of that black stream which will follow the stroke!—That one blow delivers us all, and none need ever know, so thou keep thine own counsel, who strikes it! Until then I will remain your prisoner, and even here in this direful chamber, praying for your success! Gislebert himself cannot thus suspect or accuse *me* of the deed; and I shall remain to attest to the cardinal your innocence in all the accusations brought against him!"

Roodspere shuddered—but he took the weapon which Dan Gloria relinquished, with this delirious effusion, into his hand. "Farewell, then, until—until we meet again! The cardinal will and must interfere in your behalf—you are a necessary testimony in your favour!" he exclaimed. "It is a wise precaution! If Sanc-

graal escapes me he will conclude—you may assure him—that I deceived you to your good, slipping past you as—as I purposed, had you not turned head!"

"But give me your blessing—your pardon, ere you depart. O, Roodspere, one first, one last, one only touch of those holy lips to mine! in assurance of forgiveness—in assurance that you do not look upon me altogether with abhorrence! Oh, grudge not this consolation, so small and yet so infinite, for my soul misgives me we shall never meet again!" ejaculated Dan Gloria, in broken accents, and casting herself into Roodspere's now extended arms, she indulged for a few instants in a wild paroxysm of grief and lamentation on his breast. "Oh, that when first my heart could love, its wealth of love had all been thine! But now, I know, its defiled treasures are no fit offering to thee!" she murmured, in a rhapsody of anguish. "But, ah, blessed clerk, you do not fear me now! Heaven be praised at least for that!"

"Remain in its keeping till we meet again, dear sister, though, alas, an erring one!" said Roodspere, with intense emotion. "As a sister I bid you now farewell in this embrace—and evermore you shall find in me a loyal and faithful brother, whose office it is rather

to perish than to see shame or ill he can prevent, befal her!"

Dan Gloria assented with a profound sigh, and yet with a shudder, as she withdrew from that kind but cold pressure; and then she herself opened the door of the dungeon, and in a low, sobbing tone murmured again that word whose echo lives in so many memories like the knell of departed hope—unconscious yet that for her it was to be prolonged through all the centuries of time!—earnestly renewed her request that he would secure the door—and the last glance that ever those two exchanged was given! Roodspere glided out, closed the door, securely locked it, took the bunch of keys, and commenced the descent of the tower.

He arrived, after a brief but cautious transit, on the last landing-place, descending by a flight of wooden stairs into the ground-floor chamber, tenanted by Mugwort and his wife. Here he paused for a moment to collect his thoughts, and ascertain what obstacles awaited his farther progress. A scent of spices came to his nostrils as he stood, and simultaneously the voice of Friar Gildas to his ear. The cellarer was speaking in unusually sorrowful and complaining accents, interrupting himself not unfrequently with a vast heaving sigh that sounded like the puff of a blacksmith's bellows.

"He was the bravest cock ever the world saw, dame! He had not a speck of white in all his black, save about his neck, scapular-wise, even as ourselves do wear our robes! Ah, dame, and he had no faults but such as his master also hath—for in truth he did at times drink deeper than was altogether to his good estate! Then how he would strut before the hens! O, dame, what a princely port and majesty had he! No marvel the king envied at him!"

"Hist, fair sire! Holy saints, Dan Gildas, didst thou not hear a curlew-cry from above?" interrupted Long Meg, evidently in some consternation.

"It is only the crab-apples squeaking in our mess, dame! Howbeit, we are ordered to have neither eyes, ears, nor understanding for aught that happens, high or low, to-night. And hold thee content, dame! I am not a man to mingle in shrieking matters, and we are to be quit of both our plagues to-night by as harmless a means as man can desire!" replied Gildas.

"Well, sir, as I was saying—I am as well assured as a poor laywoman can be, that my husband is a Lollard—and so I will prove on him any day!" said Long Meg. "And I can witness he is always gadding after master visitor, and he says he speaks good words, and that Hunne's ghost haunts up above for

murder—and that Father Gislebert knows who did it, for he found the monk's cloak in the chamber and hid it—and—"

"Ay, indeed, that smells hot of heretic pravity!—dame, we need another little pounding of cloves in the hippocras! But what matters it what thine husband is?" said the monk—the latter words in a very cajoling and tender manner. "There are those who love thee, in whose faith I would defy St. Thomas Aquinas to split the difference of a hair from that of the Pope of Rome himself!—why dost thou perk thine ears?"

"Oh, Jesu mercy! hear you not steps, dan monk?" ejaculated Long Meg.

"Why so, let be!—We that are in the secret know that all is well! Look into the fire, so that thou mayst be able to swear on the pix we saw nothing—and let happen what will happen!" responded Gildas; and Roodspere, thus encouraged by the conviction that his evasion was carefully provided for by his enemies themselves, descended the flight of stairs as softly but as hastily as he could.

"Oh, Sancta Maria! the devil in the monk's dress again!" murmured Long Meg, unable, masculine virago as she was, to resist one of her sex's natural impulses, and glancing

back over her shoulder as Roodspere glided through the chamber to the open door.

"Peace, peace! are there not twain of them? Let us feign to be as it were fast asleep! Nay, 'tis no use looking after them—they make into the Sanctuary at once!" said Gildas, admirably imitating a deep snore.

"O, father Gildas! what a droll art thou!" said the dame bursting into a huge laugh at this practical wit. "But, by thy smooth egg of a pate, I never saw but one, so I must have been asleep with one of mine eyen at least!"

"Holy Edward! all our hippocras is in the fire!" exclaimed Gildas, starting awake, as the rich fluid he had been so elaborately brewing suddenly boiled over the pipkin, and set the whole fire in a blaze of coloured flames. This misfortune acted as a lucky diversion for Roodspere, who nevertheless took the precaution to coast along the wall of the cemetery, instead of crossing directly to the north entrance of the church, which he had assigned himself as his destination.

CHAPTER XXX.

OUR LADY OF WESTMINSTER.

Fortunately for Roodspere, it was an extremely dark night, and no person appeared in all the compass of the vast shadow of the building towards which he now approached. The only disturbing influence he experienced was a vague fancy—perhaps a reality—that he heard a shrieking call from the iron-netted window of Hunne's dungeon, drifted to his hearing, in indistinct and ghost-like tatters, by the furious wind. But this rather accelerated his steps; imagining that Dan Gloria already repented of her concession, and was endeavouring to prevent its purposed results. But when he reached the northgate, at which he had seen Lily-Virgin enter, he found it so securely barred and bolted that the most strenuous efforts failed even to stir the massive valves.

All Roodspere's fears and suspicions were heightened by the discovery; and confiding in his monkish disguise—or rather, in his agitation, forgetful and reckless of consequences, he hurried round to the private

entrance to the church from the Cloisters. But this also was secured with its mighty bolts, and on the inside, for Roodspere found the key in the lock, and felt that it was not turned! Ceasing from a violent but useless attempt to force this strong door open, he paused in the most agonised consternation, large drops of agitation coursing down his brows. And it was at this moment of apparently utter despair that he was suddenly struck with the recollection of the adit Dan Gloria had found into the church, from the roof of the quadrangle in which he stood. He knew that she had reached it from his apartment, and he knew no reason why he should not still be able to penetrate thither. Taking his resolution with the wild promptitude rendered imperative by circumstances, he instantly crossed to the arched doorway opening on the flight of stairs that ascended to his lodgings in the abbey. The door was open; and mounting the stone steps with the air-tripping velocity of one in a dream, he found that of his chambers also ajar. But a dull shimmer of light within, which he knew could not be caused by the moon, for there was none, brought him to a standstill; and he heard a murmuring of voices that further counselled prudence. A brief observation, however,

satisfied him that both voices and light were in the farthest of the three chambers—the oratory, where he usually wrote and studied. A little further reconnaissance showed him that the confabulists were Fathers Gislebert and Nicholas of Cologne, who were earnestly engaged in making an inventory of his writings and books, discoursing all the time in low, eager accents, that attested the interest they took in their task. Both were old and dim-sighted, and so thoroughly absorbed in their business that Roodspere, inwardly rejoicing he had compiled materials for their examination so engaging, felt he did not venture too much in crossing, on tiptoe, the long sash of light cast over the bedchamber from their lamp. Two strides placed him across it, and in the shadow; but the aged inquisitors had taken care to close the lattice against the vehement wind, and the most perilous portion of his task remained.

But Roodspere quickly resolved on his course of action. He raised the upper hook of the lattice and held it firmly until he had accomplished the same with the lower one. Then, thrusting the window suddenly and widely open, he leaped out on the balustrade, closed it behind him with a violent slam, and couched close to the wall, among the dense

ivy that overhung the arch of the window, in a natural Venetian blind. It was his purpose to impress the monks with a notion that the whole was the act of the violent and capricious wind that blew round the Abbey—and he fully succeeded in the ruse. Father Nicholas indeed presented himself at the window; but a very brief inspection seemed to convince him of the state of the case, and securing the fastenings again, he retired, apparently with a satisfactory report, and with the eagerness of one interrupted in a very interesting office, to his coadjutor.

Roodspere lost not a moment after this event in following up his plan. He had so carefully noted the precise point at which Dan Gloria disappeared, on the memorable night of her seeking refuge in his chamber, that he did not doubt he could find it; and adopting her precautions, he traversed the intervening angle to the spot where he imagined she had vanished from his gaze. It was perfectly easy to do so—the leads of the cloister formed a broad, continuous gallery, and were ballustraded by the ornamental summits of the arches below. The transit completed, he found himself standing before one of the great illuminated windows of the lower gallery, over the aisles of the south transept. The

thought suggested itself that some opening might have been contrived for the ventilation of the church in the framework; and he was anxiously searching for the marks of division to be expected in the seams of the glass, when his researches were suddenly aided in an unexpected manner. Some one passed along the interior of the gallery, with a lamp in his hand, which suddenly threw into vivid, though reversed relief, the kaleidoscope pictures in the window, and revealed a long streaming demarcation between certain of its panes and the rest. The figure passed instantly, steeped in all the colours of a dying dolphin, and carefully shading the lamp in its hand. But its appurtenant visage was thereby thrown into more vivid relief, and Roodspere recognised Prior Sancgraal!

He scarcely waited until this phantom had passed on some reasonable distance, to essay to open the window-door; and to his great delight it yielded at the first pressure. It had not probably been secured since Dan Gloria last used it on her mysterious entrances and exits. Friar Gildas would not have found it easy to enter at the opening thus presented; but Roodspere had not fattened even by his residence in a luxurious monastery, and easily pushed through into the gallery. Sancgraal's

lamp still twinkled at the extremity like a remote star, and the intruder hesitated not an instant, though cautiously, to follow in its track. But first, that he might make sure no extremity should betray him into use of the homicidal weapon Dan Gloria had confided to his keeping, with so deadly a prompting, he threw it away into the cloister. He heard it strike into the turf as it fell,—and then hastened on in the wake of his unwitting guide. Nor was he discouraged by observing, after a few steps, that the light vanished as suddenly as a will-o'-th'-wisp in a marsh. He concluded, very rightly, that Sancgraal had turned into the descent of the stairs leading to the basement of the church. Nevertheless he stumbled over the first two or three stairs in the eagerness of his pursuit, in the opaque darkness that succeeded the disappearance of the lamp, and he was obliged to pause for a few seconds to make certain that he was not overheard. This appeared to be the case; and, resuming the descent, he arrived, after what seemed to him an endless succession of downward steps, at the door in the south cross which he had observed to be the one used by visitors to the Hermitage of St. Wulfin. This was not usually locked, and moreover, in these first

hours of what appeared to be his triumphant success, Sancgraal could not deem any precaution necessary. Roodspere easily passed into the interior of the church, which presented only an immense mass of darkness, wherein Sancgraal's torch moved like a rapid glowworm. But Roodspere was now familiar with the localities, and he followed without hesitation, even when the light again disappeared in the windings of the ambulatory. Occasionally the white glare of marble, or the gilded ornament of a tomb, broke into relief as the weird prior passed on. But nothing seemed to attract his attention: and Roodspere felt that the same magnet exercised an absorbing influence on both. Make what diligence, however, he might in pursuit, the prior had entered the gates of brazen lacework that admit into the mausoleum chapel of Henry VII., before he could arrive; and ascending the steps of the sombre triple portico that conducts to it, he found himself compelled to halt before that transparent but impassable barrier. Sancgraal had locked the gate after him, and was proceeding, with a freer torch and more rapid step, over the tesselated pavement, to the Lady-Altar at the opposite extremity of the chapel. The tomb of the founder of this superb mausoleum intervened,

but Roodspere had little doubt that Lily-Virgin was there. Yet it was hopeless for him to attempt to force an entrance through those seemingly light and frangible webs of brasswork. In all probability he would only give an alarm fatal to himself and useless to the purpose of his interposition. But it occurred to him that he could at least approach much nearer the scene of action by traversing one of the open side aisles with which, like a miniature cathedral, the Chapel of our Lady was, and is, furnished. He chose the righthand one, and hastily traversed the aisle as far as the first chapelet, on that side which is now almost occupied by the immense monument of Ludowick Stuart, Duke of Richmond, and his Duchess. So far, the high backs of the stalls of the nave, or choir, and, where he had now arrived, a richly-wrought and lofty screen, prevented all ingress into the main body of the building. But from that point it was easy both to see and hear whatever occurred in the space before the altar, the deep darkness and screen effectually concealing his presence; and the more so that the altar itself was very faintly illuminated by a few wax tapers that deepened every shadow beyond their scanty range. This light sufficed to throw into more awful obscurity the black-

veiled Madonna on the shrine, while it illumined with something of a ghostly and shroud-like sheen the white robes of a female figure, cowering in helpless terror at the feet of Prior Sancgraal, on the lowest step of the ascent of the altar. It must be left to the imagination of the reader with what feelings Roodspere recognised his betrothed, in this attitude, kneeling before his triumphant enemy! Nevertheless, Sancgraal was speaking in tones that bore no traces of any such exultation,—rather were fraught with sadness and gloom. "Thou seest, daughter, I have not forgotten thee!—Hast thou completed thy prescribed devotion to our Lady, and art thou now prepared to unburthen thy soul of all the pernicious stuff thine heretic betrayer hath choked its once pure channels withal?"

"Nay, father, I cannot pray!—I cannot string my rosary as I was wont!—My thoughts wander, I know not whither!—I am as one that must needs yield to slumber on the soft wreaths of snow, though he wot well his sleep is death!—I cannot pray to our Lady—my thoughts flitter away like wild birds; I cannot command their stay!" replied Lily-Virgin.

"Our Lady will not suffer you to pray to her!—which is a proof that you continue in your mortal sin, in that, being the plighted

spouse of heaven, you still cherish an adulterous passion for the heretic who taught you first to sin!" returned the prior, with a stern emphasis on every word. "Is it not so? Confess, and confess it truly; for, then, indeed, must I conclude you utterly lost, knowing, as you now do, what crime is involved in such a love!—knowing that he is your father's son as truly as you are daughter of Sir Amias Paulet!"

"I love him still—and must, to the latest hour of my existence; but with such a love as need in no wise anger our Lady, father prior!" replied Lily, with a heartbroken sigh. "But I have done—and I will do—all that humanity can, to redeem my soul from its impurity! I cannot cease to love him!—but I will never speak to him, never see him, never think of him again—if it may be! If not, our Lady will take pity on me, and call me up thither to dwell with her, where it is no sin to love!"

Every word of this utterance, to one of its auditors, was the sweetest, though the most meltingly-pathetic of music—to another, the most excruciating series of discords!

"And dost thou indeed deem, foolish girl, that such a repentance—such an abnegation of thy sin—can content our offended Lord and his holiest mother? Miserable woman! thou dost

but thereby render thy doom the more certainly assured! And with every word sinkest thy soul a fathom deeper in the seas of flame!" he replied, in terrific accents of denunciation, low-toned as they were.

"What, then, can I do? — Jesu-Maria! what can I do to save me from your just wraths?" said Lily-Virgin, evidently struck with extreme terror, and clasping her hands in aghast supplication to the restored confessor.

"Neither our Lady nor her Divine Son can be satisfied—no true proof of penitence and submission will you have given—until you consent to bear witness against this man, of his heresies!—until you complete your plighted espousals with the glorious king, who but awaits your consent to salute you his bride before the angels!" returned Sancgraal, in the strange allegorical style adopted by his church, in typifying the spiritual relation indicated. "Fulfil these conditions, daughter, and you will have peace again, and the fruition of eternal bliss, even on this barren and rocky shore of time, which now with bleeding feet, as one cast from a wrecked barque, you stumble on!"

Roodspere listened for the reply as intensely as love to catch the beatings of a heart it fears is for ever still!

"No, my lord prior, no; it is impossible! Our Lady was human once! she cannot command me to deliver his goodly frame to the rasping teeth of fire! I cannot, I will not, avouch aught against him!" returned Lily, with a sudden energy, and even vehemence, that startled her subtle tormentor himself. "Neither know I aught against him! He is no heretic! he shows me all his proofs in the blessed books which also ye profess to acknowledge the foundation of all truth! But for what you would have me do concerning fulfilment of my plight to our Lady, which, true it is, you wrung from me formerly—let me but see the Cardinal—let me but hear him say that Raphael is not his son—and, indeed, ye may enclose me living in a grave, and I will not murmur more!"

"You have seen and spoken with the Cardinal's most trusted servant—one well acquainted with the whole story—who received the dying confession of Roodspere's mother from her own lips! Why should she lie then, and against her only child?—To see the Cardinal himself will be but to expose you to his base temptations, which, now that you have lost all faith in our Lord Jesu and his blessed mother, may prevail! It was therefore that this betrayer was set upon his hideous feigning!

Meanwhile, poor soul! you saw not how, even then, and all the while of his pretended wooing, he made merry with Prioress Juliana over your credulous beliefs!" said Sancgraal, with savage irony.

"Why, now, prior, I know that you belie him—and all may be lies alike!" said Lily-Virgin, with passionate excitement. "He shunned her ever; it was she that vexed him with her foolish following, insomuch that at last she hated him, and spoke only evil of him alway!"

"What I say is true, natheless; that was but a contrived show, the better to deceive your simple trust!" returned Sancgraal, with eyes that sparkled fearfully in the shadow of his cowl. "Nay, worse will yet appear of him when the whole mask of his hypocrisy is stripped off to the wondering light of the sun! Meanwhile, doubt not, if innocent of these facts, he will have an opportunity of proving himself so! Even as I speak—by the king's own word of command, on perusal of our charges—he is consigned to our prison of the Gatehouse, whence he will only come forth to judgment—and condemnation; for who can doubt a priest to be a heretic who openly declares his resolve to wed—Sancta Maria!—to *wed*, a betrothed bride of heaven? He, a beggarly

clerk—a lowborn Lollard knave, already rejected like a foul morsel from the loathing stomach of his University—to wed a daughter of the Paulets, who fought breast to breast with mine own ancestors, the great De Valences—albeit, I nothing boast my glorious parentage!"

Lily-Virgin apparently heard little of this harangue but its first few words. "In the Gatehouse!—on the king's warrant!—Roodspere a prisoner!"—she gasped, with a distraction in her tones that might have confirmed all Sancgraal's suspicions, had any proof been wanting to them. And Roodspere was compelled to listen powerlessly to the vehement diatribe in which Sancgraal renewed the basest accusations against him, denouncing him as the Cardinal's agent, as a wretch devoured by licentious passions, a heretic, a seducer!—while at the same time he overwhelmed Lily herself with vehement reproaches and assurances that unless she assisted to bring her lover to justice she would share an eternal condemnation with him in futurity. But if anything could have consoled Roodspere for this bitter exercise of patience, it might have been the words the affrighted girl yet commanded resolution to reply. "Be it even so! I would rather give myself than Raphael to the devouring flames!

If he is your prisoner, and must perish, sacrifice us both together, for if his heresy be love, it is also mine! Oh! heaven forbid that I should aid you in your work!"

"Wherefore not?" replied Sancgraal, with fiendish energy. "If thou lovest him—as well it seems thou dost—the sublimer and holier were thy deed to give him to his doom! Sacrifice! is not sacrifice the very soul and seal of religion? Would not Israel have sacrificed his only son, the son of his old age—have slaughtered him like a mere sheep, to obey the word of the Lord? What am I, Liulph Bigod, but a sacrifice even from my birth? My mother's pious longing and devotion to St. Edward sent me into the world cheated of my fair proportions—dedicated, from the hour I saw the light, to men's derision, and women's scorn! Have I not renounced my name and heritage, all the glories and pleasures high birth and rich inheritance could yield, to become a cloistered monk? And more than all this!—far more!—Why should I not disclose the secret of a passion which fire from heaven lighted, like sinless Abel's sacrifice—which dishonours thee not as doth the earthy passion of thy betrayer!—but can content its utmost greed with the divine union of spirit with spirit!—which hath left no means untried to obtain the con-

secration of the white flame of your virgin love to heaven alone?"

Sancgraal paused; but, after a glance at Lily-Virgin, continued with increasing vehemence,—

"Yet deem not I am so cold, so insensible, so cleared of all the dross of human passion as would render this great sacrifice none! I am a monk, but I have within me the burning soul—the terrible vitality of thought which—I know not whether it be of heaven's or the fiend's gift—minstrels and poets receive in fatal dowry at their birth! The fierce blood of Norman conquerors and of sea kings revels in my veins! Thou seest, then, that mine was no puny infant's task—to put the rein and bit upon those fiery passions that still foam and bleed in the curb I have constrained them under! Yea, and from my earliest childhood, beauty in every form—were it but in a flower, in a cloud, in the waft of a censer—held a witchery to ensnare mine eyes and heart! Canst thou deem, then, that woman—being, as it were, the incarnation and visual presence of all the forms of beauty—the blush and fragrance of the flower, the bright softness of the wandering cloud, the grace of the floating censer's purply fumes!—attracted not my forbidden eyes, from mine earliest dawn of sense,

with the most potent spells of all?—How I struggled with this haunting and alluring fiend of Beauty, and came forth triumphant over all the temptations that gathered in infinite shapes around me, is not for your audience, snowy Lily of the Virgin! But it was not the merciless and unceasing severities of Gislebert, nor the massive restraints that fettered every beating of my heart, every throb of nature in my veins—that saved me! It was our most holy Lady's protecting care, to whose adoration I had dedicated myself with a very passion of devotion, from my earliest childhood! Yet what, indeed, is she but the deification of woman—of all that is bright, beautiful, pure, and consoling upon the earth? Not such as we behold her in this time-consecrated statue, indeed, I figured her!—but such as thyself art, beauteous one!—or might have been if an infant heir of thy loveliness were feeding softly in thy bosom, like a lamb nibbling the first red-dropped daisies of the spring! Stand you amazed to hear such words from me—from a monk? I do but speak them that you may know the full extent of the sacrifice I made when I dedicated you, in your spotless purity, to heaven! for I appeal to yourself if ever, until this instant, have I revealed, by word, by gesture, even by look, the passion that devours

my very marrows with its cruel flame!—Yea, from the first instant I beheld thee, I loved—I worshipped thee—with all the powers, the frenzy of my soul!—with all the ardour of the fiery blood I inherit—of the boundless imagination that revels like an emperor of the world, in my brain! Yet I bound my madness in a million chains, and compelled it to gnash and rave, conquered and subdued, like the dragon of St. Michael beneath the tramp of his silver-hoofed steed! I love thee still, indeed! I love thee—but with a sublimed and celestial passion which, reversing the carnal love of this man, seeks only a spiritual, though an eternal recompense, in the fruition of your salvation! *I* need no base sensual satisfaction! I ask none—or at most only the beatitude of your constant contemplation! The rapt communion of soul with soul, in the ecstatic glimpses of paradise that heaven affords, even on earth, to its faithful ones, shall content all my cravings! We will be to each other a holier Abelardus and his Heloysa! and my doom will lose all its sadness when shared by thee! Or, rather, we will be to each other even as thrice-blessed Edward and his maiden wife, who sleep no colder now, side by side, in the sepulchre, than of old in the marriage couch! All the sanctity, the beauty, the divinity of love, may be

ours, without its earthly stains! And to secure this priceless object, to redeem you from the endless chastisements that await your constancy in evil; if the sacrifice of my own existence, by the most cruel means, were necessary, I would yield it! Judge, then, whether I will spare this man!"

The frightful energy the prior pronounced these latter words with, did nevertheless not produce the effect he anticipated, even on the timid girl at his feet. "Oh, now—now, I see why you hate him!—why you persecute—why you would give him to the flames, cruel monk! You have oft affrighted me before with your strange looks, and close breathings, that seem laden with flakes of fire from the abyss! But I am glad of it now!—I see why you should belie and wrong him, as surely you have done; and the queen's majesty shall know — the queen's majesty shall know — why it is not good for me to remain any longer with you here alone, which I will not!"

This unexpected turn it was, that induced Roodspere to pause in the blind and agitated attempts he was now making to scale the lofty screen that separated him from the interlocutors, and which afforded neither grasp nor footing, in all its smooth extent.

"This is why I *must*—if it be necessary to preserve you—bring Roodspere to his doom, were his blood sprung from the same fount as mine own, in a mother's heart! The brother I have is my father's son, but I feel I should scarcely count him in the scale!" returned Sancgraal. "And the only assurances I will accept, are, that you fulfil, without further delay, your long plighted promise to our Lord Jesu, and celebrate your espousals with him openly! And that you consent to bear public testimony against this monstrous seducer, this heretic, Lutheran apostate who, forsooth, declares himself the rival of the Prince of Light!"

"I will bear no such witness! I have plighted Roodspere my faith — I cannot make these vows you demand of me, lord prior!" said Lily-Virgin, with unexpected and extraordinary vehemence. "Take this for my reply—and now, I pray you, let me depart! I have done my reverence to Our Lady and I will return to the palace, if I must —but I *will* hence! Why has Barbara left me here alone?"

"Barbara has gone to Clerkenwell—to summon your sisters to attend hither, at daybreak, to celebrate your bridalty in all befitting pomp and splendour!" replied Sanc-

graal, in tones that sounded harsh and inflexible as those of destiny herself. "Dost thou hear me, Lily of the Virgin? On St. Edward's day last past, the year of your novitiate was completed. On this night must yourself decide on your eternal weal or woe; and either you shall fulfil your plighted vows —whereby only can you be saved from the noisome passion of the Cardinal, and the sacrilegious wooing of his emissary—or I will prevent all future danger on both their scores, in a manner that shall satisfy you there is no refuge remaining for you but the cloister! I give you until dawn to form your resolution, here at our Lady's feet in prayer—whence I command you not to depart by a hair's-breadth! I will myself to the shrine, and not cease to importune St. Edward in your behalf! But if, when daylight comes, and I return to know what conclusion you have formed, you still refuse the outstretched arms that wait to clasp you in their celestial embrace, I will instantly hold a chapter of my brethren, and proceed to the judgment of your heretic seducer! What the sentence shall be, you cannot doubt! But the earthly flames whereto your obstinacy will consign him, are as nothing compared with the everlasting fires that await his rebellious spirit

when it flees howling from its tortured flesh into the gulfs of damnation! You have heard of my doings ere now against the heretics, and may conjecture if I am to be frighted from infliction of justice by any fear of consequences!—But the King hath already condemned your betrayer, and his wicked sire, the Cardinal—if sire he be!—is powerless in his behalf, if even he will not rather rejoice to be rid of a rival who has so scandalously abused the powers he bestowed upon him, to serve his own as vile ends!—Ponder well on these words of mine, Lily Paulet! and remember that your seducer's sentence is on your own lips—not mine!"

He moved, as if to depart, as he spoke these words, resumed his lamp,—and then paused, shading its strong lustre full on his visage, as he gazed down on the panic-striken figure at the foot of the altar. Every muscle of that countenance rankled like a nest of adders, with evil passions!— and even the terrible words with which he concluded, perhaps, scarcely did justice to all the horror and atrocity in his thoughts. "Ascend to the feet of the Virgin and there kneel, and implore her guidance and aid!—for who knows? —If Heaven cannot give you power to imitate my sacrifice, hell may drive me on the imita-

tion of your seducer's sacrilege!—Think of this also, and make your resolve!" Then, with a darkly satisfied glance at the bewildered countenance of his victim, Sancgraal slowly, and frequently turning his head, retraced his steps from the Chapel of our Lady.

So far Roodspere, baffled in all his attempts to clamber the screen, without the certainty of creating an alarm, that would probably bring assistance only to his adversary, awaited the result of this scene with indescribable agitation. But he now conceived hopes of a more favourable solution. Time was given him to contrive the means of rescue!—Sancgraal was not to return until dawn. He might possibly omit to lock the chapel, or at least to take the keys of it with him in his retreat. But Roodspere felt himself capable of rending the screen piecemeal away, if necessary to reach and rescue his beloved—and some such operation might be effected, if he was not obstructed. He waited, therefore, with amazing patience, until he heard the brazen gates of the chapel jingle together on the prior's exit—he even listened, without venturing a murmur of consolation, to the nigh frantic burst of supplication and grief with which Lily-Virgin cast herself at the feet of the black-veiled statue; and which at the same time

confessed the reascendancy of the superstitions he had vainly hoped to remove. He let several moments pass—he strove to render them minutes—before he commenced retracing his own steps in the aisle, to the Dark Porch. But when he reached its extremity, he was, at once luckily and unluckily, warned not to leave the superb little cabinet the aisle there forms, by the rasping of a key in the lock of the great portal. The complete darkness within the aisle sheltered him; but he perceived that Sancgraal was resolved to neglect no precaution to secure his prey! Still one consolation was deducible—that he certainly meant to retire for awhile completely from the scene. Taught by the danger he had just escaped, Roodspere awaited, though breathless with impatience, until the last gleam of Sancgraal's light had disappeared in the ambulatory. And his patience was in some measure rewarded, for it occurred to him as he stood thus in expectation, that by climbing the stately tomb of the mother of Henry VII., in view of which he stood, he might be enabled to reach the top of the choir stalls, and so scramble over into the body of the chapel. And indeed, the moment the light disappeared—without dread of disturbing the royal Countess's slumber in her

stately mausoleum, Roodspere clambered upon it, and found that he could reach the fretted summits of the stalls without difficulty. But perhaps he might not have found it so easy to accomplish the rest of his purpose, if a shriek had not suddenly reached his hearing, which seemed to endow him with supernatural force! How he accomplished it himself scarcely knew; but in an instant he had slung himself over into a stall — leaped from that on the pavement of the church — and stood on the base of the Lady Altar.

But where was the object of this adventurous passage? Roodspere's eyesight almost deserted him, in the intensity of his gaze, searching for her form amid the dim radiance cast by the almost exhausted tapers on the shrine. But suddenly it was caught, and for a moment infinitely startled, by the portentous and terrifically unmeaning brilliancy of a pair of orbs that seemed to glare down upon him from the now displayed visage of the statue! A moment's consideration satisfied his firm and reasoning senses, that these miraculous optics were in reality two large and extremely bright diamonds that flashed, in certain conjunctures of light, with something of supernatural splendour on the beholder. And then he noted how the veil usually concealing this effect,

which depended a good deal on suddenness and surprise, had fallen off, and lay at the feet of the statue. He looked there, and perceived the outline of a form beneath the black covering of the veil—sprang forward, raised it—and with a consternation that almost took from him the power of movement, he perceived the prostrate and apparently inanimate form of Lily-Virgin!

He raised her instantly, and a voice which antiquity believed had once power to recal a spirit from beyond the else inexorable shores of Acheron — sounded in the half-departed senses of Lily-Virgin, and recalled them to her powerless frame. "My life, my soul, my Lily, my all!—it is I, thy Raphael!—come to redeem thee from this devilish monk!—My love, my wife! it is indeed I, saved by heaven to preserve thee!"

A joyful, half delirious — half incredulous shriek—burst from Lily-Virgin's very heart, as these words struck upon her returning senses. "Thou, Raphael, thou! Oh, no, no, no!—Thou art a prisoner in the Gatehouse —the monks keep thee there for the flames! Pardon, most blessed Lady, pardon!— at least, do not madden me thus!—I will obey thy will, if it be death!—but let not the fiend mock me any longer thus!" And to Rood-

spere's increasing dismay she tore herself from his arms, and threw herself again at the feet of the statue, uttering a wild rhapsody of prayer and supplication, whose drift he could by no means apprehend.

It was indeed only after a very considerable loss of a time, every moment of which was valuable, that Roodspere acquired a clear understanding of what had befallen his betrothed. "It is in vain, it is in vain! I know thou art the fiend, disguised in his angel form! Our Lady herself hath answered me, and would have me save him too! O, Roodspere, if thou art he, but that thou canst not be!—even as I knelt at her feet, lost in prayer—mine eyes glazed and misty with the tears I have shed for thee, imploring some sign of her will—she stretched her arms, and threw the Black Veil over me! Her own—with her glorious Son's most woful visage of redemption on it—over me!"

"This wooden image extended its arms, and covered thee with a veil!" exclaimed Roodspere. "Hypocrite forgers! or have they driven her mad?"

"I am not mad!—If these eyes behold thee now, my Raphael! I saw the statue of our Lady extend its arms over me—raise her veil, while her eyes flashed upon me with blinding

light, and cast it over me like a cloud of darkness!"

"The measure of these men's iniquities is full, and fire from heaven will surely consume them from the earth!" said Roodspere. "Behold, then, how thou art deceived!—I will soon show thee by what secret springs and contrivances these wooden idols of the monks are taught to work their miracles!" And seized with more than the iconoclastic fury of the coming times, Roodspere sprang up, tore the Diana of Westminister from her pedestal, and as he cast her headlong down the steps of the altar, the intricate machinery of pulleys and weights, apparently communicating in the crypt below the chapel, became very visibly exposed!

After this display, Roodspere had certainly much less difficulty in soothing the terrors of Lily-Virgin, and in inducing her to lend a less distracted attention to his revelations. With an inconceivable brevity—an electricity of expression—he expounded to her all the dangers of their mutual position—the necessity of immediate action! He enumerated with what truly might be called winged words, the discoveries he had made of Sancgraal's turpitude, of the vile scandals he had propagated against himself—his own futile attempt to pro-

cure their deliverance by means of the alliance of Anne Boleyn—and, in conclusion, he entreated Lily-Virgin to accept the only hope of refuge that remained to them, and fly with him into the Sanctuary. "The monks cannot violate the privileges of their own asylum —the king himself dares not!—My father will relent in time, and meanwhile, my sweet betrothed, if thou wilt give thy loving consent, we can compel his tardy compliance with my entreaties—I can convince thee of the falsehood of mine enemies' calumnies, and place thee out of the reach of all their machinations! A good priest, who is there, in the Sanctuary, will sanctify our love by marriage!—and we can flee thence, when opportunity serves, blessed in each other's company, unblamed by any but such as this flagitious monk, who, under pretence of dedicating thee to heaven, would secure thee in his own trammels, out of all human help!"

But extreme and pressing as was the danger, the superstitious novice recoiled with a species of horror from this proposition. "O, Raphael, Raphael! shall I not thus become the perjuress of our blessed Lord? Will He not wreak his vengeance on me?—And He is almighty!—no Sanctuary can protect me from His arm!"

"No!—rather He will cover us with His protection from the evil designs of our enemies! —O, Lily, canst thou think that the divine goodness takes part with a betrayer and adulterer, a murtherer—for all these I have proved Sancgraal to be—against us?—But as thou wilt!—We will stay together here, and await his return, since thou willest it so!—With what dire thoughts in his breast against thyself, his own tongue confessed, and the fiend he serves will likely prompt!—While thou givest him to the stake and the flames, whom thou didst once feign to love, as dearly as the chastity thus abandoned to a murtherous ravisher!"

This appeal could not be resisted. "Let us flee then—whither, and how thou wilt!" Lily-Virgin murmured, giving both her hands to Roodspere, who pressed them in a transport of joy to his breast. And it was not until that precise instant he recollected that the manner by which he had himself entered the chapel was by no means suitable for the egress of a young female. "But I will wrench the doors from their staples sooner than fail!" he exclaimed, "or mayhap some one of the keys of the Gatehouse may fit the wards.—But at least they will serve me for forcing irons!—Let me bear thee hence, my Lily; I feel a

giant's strength when it is for thee I put forth mine own!"

"No, no; I can walk, I am not all exhaust!" ejaculated Lily-Virgin, hurriedly. "But let us hence indeed!—lest our Lady verily stretch her arms to drag me back!—Oh, what will the gentle queen say when she shall hear of this?"

Dreading a relapse into the superstitious delirium from which he had with so much difficulty recalled her, Roodspere threw his arm round the poor girl's tottering frame, and led her down the chapel. But as they neared the aerial portals, a new, and certainly an unexpected and appalling prodigy, nigh dissipated all the effect of his arguments and fond persuasions. What appeared to be a phantom, arrayed in regal robes of purple and gold, crowned and sceptred, with a long beard, a bloodless visage, and the very lineaments ascribed to the Confessor, in one of the ancient illuminations of the church — visible in a dull glimmer that shone like a hidden lamp in its high-spiked crown—appeared ascending the steps of the Dark Porch! The colours of the grave were in its utterly bloodless visage, visible in that pale-green, phosphoric glory; and but for the limp in its gait, the Reformer himself would have been struck with the

appalling notion that he beheld the apparition of St. Edward, leaving the sepulchre to confront him on his way! "My Lily," he murmured, placing himself so as to intercept the first view of this pretended ghostly visitant, "be firm; here comes this false miracle-actor, disguised as St. Edward himself!—the king who betrayed his people to a stranger!—whose revengeful bitterness despised the charms of the daughter of his enemies, whom he had yet made his wife, and who called his hatred sanctity! Sancgraal comes, doubtless, in this disguise, to complete his triumph over thy reason, and the miracle of the veil! Be calm, and thou shalt see how I will pay this conjuror in his own coin! And lo, he is sent, unknowingly, to set us free!—he unlocks the gates!"

"Go on! If it be Death himself, with thee I will meet him, face to face!" replied Lily-Virgin, in tones of supernatural courage. Roodspere drew the cowl of his monk's robe over his face, and continued his advance, still supporting the now wonderfully reanimated frame of Lily-Virgin, which yet scarcely needed his assistance. And thus it was that the simulated apparition of the Confessor, throwing back the portals of the Chapel of our Lady with a smooth glide, suddenly beheld in his

path the forms of a Benedictine monk, and of the youthful novice, visible in the sickly glare shed from his own artfully contrived lights.

"Sancgraal Bigod!" said a hollow voice, which struck with terror the inmost heart even of the atheistic but guilty prior. "Sancgraa Bigod!—why hast thou compelled me, the founder of thine order, to revisit the earth, and redeem this maiden from thy lusts and blasphemous simulations? In St. Benedict's name, and by his power, I command you to yield free way to her departure—to lay aside the habit thou hast profaned by so many crimes—to hasten to the dungeon where thy murtherous hands throttled Marchant Hunne—redeem his miserable widow thence—wed her—and depart for ever with her from Westminster, into some land where justice may yet, perforce, leave thee time for repentance, if time can repent crimes so infinite! Dost thou hear?"

But to Roodspere's own amazement, who had scarcely calculated on producing more than a momentary alarm, and who was bracing every nerve for a mortal struggle with his adversary, Prior Sancgraal sank powerless before him, senseless on the steps of the Dark Porch! Extremes, indeed, had met; and the excess of an atheistic incredulity which utterly ignore

all spiritual existence, suddenly lapsed into the infinite void of the superstitions from which it had arisen, a phantom giant, in the mind of Sancgraal Bigod! Concluding that he encountered a tangible evidence of that tremendous unknown his guilty hopes strove to ignore, even his audacious and defying spirit yielded to the overwhelming horror of the supposition.

"Lean on me, my sweet one!—Nay, let me bear thee hence!—We have conquered, and have not struck a blow!—The cloister door may easily be unbarred from within; I have the keys of the Sanctuary gate!—We have but to take a dozen steps, and we are saved!" were Roodspere's ecstatic words; and with the speed of spirits newly freed from the bondage of the flesh, and hastening into paradise, the lovers sped past the prostrate form of Prior Sancgraal.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SANCTUARY.

Early on the morning following the escape of Roodspere and his betrothed from Westminster Abbey, a variety of strange reports became rife among the least curious of the *quidnuncs* in the vicinity and precincts. Certain authorities averred that the king himself, on examination of the charges laid against Raphael Roodspere, had ordered him into confinement in the Gatehouse. There was a well authenticated rumour that this interposition was obtained by the prayers of the saintly prior, Sancgraal Bigod, who was discovered by Treasurer Gislebert, at daybreak, in an ecstasy of devotion, before the shrine of St. Edward, gloriously transfigured, and crowned with a flaming aureol!—and so insensible to all earthly considerations, it was with difficulty he was brought to understand that the nuns of Clerkenwell, with their prioress at their head, waited upon him, by his own especial commands, to receive a sister into their order, who, however, it turned out was, not forthcoming! Opinions

differed as to the cause of the latter disappointment. Some said that the novice, Lily-Virgin, who was expected, had suddenly refused to perform her part in the contract, and remained in the royal palace. Others, that she had pretended a willingness to do what was required of her, and had effected an evasion from the queen's protection on the way to the Abbey. Certain knowing persons, who observed that the church was most diligently searched by Gislebert's orders, and with the zealous assistance of the Clerkenwell nuns, declared that the young novice was suspected of having secreted herself in the enclosure, to evade the completion of her vows! Finally, it was whispered that, even in the Abbey itself, fears were entertained Prior Sancgraal's mind was somewhat unhinged by his persecutions, or, that the excess of devotion to which he had lately dedicated himself, had subjected him to the influence of hallucinations of a very singular description! There were reports of strange averments he made concerning an apparition of St. Benedict, who had presented himself before him in a menacing and warning manner! The miraculous image of our Lady was found dashed down the steps of her own altar, severely mutilated, and her famous veil torn in

halves! Up to first refectory time, there were those among the monks themselves, who did not scruple to hint their suspicions that all these portents were results of an access of religious frenzy on the part of the prior. It was stated that Father Gislebert continued vainly engaged in soothing his delirious excitement, shut up with him in the Hermitage of St. Wulfin. Certain of the elder brethren, who thought they might have some possible chance of succeeding to the priorate, if it was vacant, expressed their fears lest he should be tempted to commit suicide by the extraordinary facilities offered in that dreadful altitude! But about the hour alluded to, all apprehensions on this score were set at rest. Prior Sancgraal himself descended from the Hermitage, apparently perfectly calm and composed, excepting that he was lividly pale, and that his eyes had an extraordinary glow in them. Yet these facts could scarcely be noted, as he had drawn his cowl over his face. And to the great astonishment of all familiar with the divisions of faction in the monastery, it was stated, and by the good authority of the almoner himself, that he was the fortunate means of satisfying Father Gislebert and the disquieted prior also, that the latter was labouring under no delusion so far

as regarded the presence of some stranger, in the Benedictine habit, over night in the church, and the reality of Lily-Virgin's arrival and evasion from it. This official stated, that happening to be looking out of his window in the abbot's house about midnight, disturbed by a faint screeching sound which he imagined came from the direction of the Gatehouse, he distinctly saw the figures of a monk, and of a female dressed in white, pass hurriedly out of the Cloisters, and hasten over the churchyard towards the Sanctuary. He had an idea, he modestly stated—having observed the arrival of Mistress Lily on the previous night—that it was the prior himself escorting her thither, impressed with the necessity of her taking immediate refuge under the wings of the church, from her persecutors. And that was the reason he had not given the alarm.

Father Nicholas of Cologne returned about the same time from the palace, whither he had been sent on a message, with the intelligence that Lily-Virgin had not returned thither, and with most anxious orders from the queen to lose not an instant in her pursuit and recovery. It was now very evident that the prior's hallucinations had some extremely substantial foundation. But what it was that induced

him, the moment he had learned these particulars, to hasten alone to the Gatehouse prison, could only be conjectured by the sagest of the observers. Some said that he suspected the prisoner so triumphantly lodged there on the previous night had effected his escape. It had already been remarked that the Sanctuary postern continued closed at an unusual hour, and the clamours of its denizens to be allowed their usual exit, caused the discovery of the important fact that the jail keys were left hanging in it, and that the jailer himself had disappeared! The keys were brought to Gislebert, but abruptly assumed by the prior, who besides rejected all offers of accompaniment in the visitation he immediately undertook to the Gatehouse. It was even reported by Benson, who witnessed the scene, that a striking manifestation of difference of opinion between these two eminent monastic personages ensued, on the subject of which of them should go to ascertain the safety of the imprisoned visitor. Although Gislebert expressed merely a desire to relieve his exhausted pupil of a troublesome duty on that score, Sancgraal, it appeared, made him an answer full of exasperation and revolt. "Master Treasurer!" he said, instead

of addressing him by the usual more respectful designation of "father," "You are then at last to learn that I, and not you, am prior of Westminster, and to the best of my poor ability, am alone to resolve on what is fittest to be done in this, and all other matters, relating to the governance of the Abbey!—And, hearken! — all tyrannies have their end when the slave will no longer be one, at whatever cost!—and I tell you that henceforth I reject and cast off yours!—Ay, and who knoweth better than yourself, wherefore it is not expedient you should go on this office of visitation to our prisoners?"

Gislebert grew very pale, but he no longer attempted to chafe with this strange mood, and he handed the keys of the jail to his rebellious pupil, without further comment. Sancgraal then hastened to the Gatehouse. He entered the ground-floor chamber, announcing himself only by a quick, startling rap. In a corner, on a heap of broom, sheepskins, and straw, lay Friar Gildas, dead drunk, and snoring like a wheezy bagpipes. Long Meg was engaged in sweeping up the hearth, while her tongue wagged without ceasing at the idiot turnkey, who with his habitual muscular grin on his visage, but certainly without any cor-

responding mirthful emotion, sate picking hay-seed out of the tangles of his long matted red-hair, denoting on what sort of couch he stretched himself by night. The poor wretch probably suffered some species of physical annoyance from the ceaseless clang of that merciless tongue in his ears; but his understanding, if he had any, was evidently not greatly disturbed. The moment Sancgraal appeared, he gave a low, joyful whine, and sprung up like a dog that beholds the approach of its master, or of some well-esteemed guest. For some reason or another, the prior was peculiarly kind and affable to this poor fellow, who was scorned and maltreated by almost every one else; and his gratitude and affection in return might have attested his claims to a more exalted condition than the mere animal existence which, in general, appeared to be the only one he shared. But on this occasion Sancgraal took no notice of him. He addressed a few stern queries to Long Meg, regarding the cause of her husband's absence, which seemed to daunt even her audacious spirit, and inquired if he had left his prisoner in safe custody? Long Meg gave but a vacant and stammering reply to this question; and, observing hastily that he would ascertain the fact for himself,

Prior Sancgraal proceeded to ascend the tower.

A physician who had seen him mounting would have imagined he was labouring under some grievous disease of the respiratory organs. He paused frequently, and breathed hard at all the air-holes as he passed them—and lingered several times, supporting himself at the openings, and gazing outward with disturbed and perhaps not always very visual orbs. The turns in the ascent presented different views; now it was a glance over the monastic precincts into the great courtyard of the neighbouring palace, so often the scene of the splendid pageantries of the tournament—and he ground his teeth with strange and seemingly uncalled-for exasperation. Anon, a pleasant view expanded over lands lustrous with the richest cultivation, browsed by the herds and flocks of the Abbey. Was it not marvellous that the wise and learned Prior of Westminster paused on one of these latter occasions, and gazed with something of envy and indescribable mournfulness on the foremost of a group of cattle, feeding with its large tranquil head close to the green ground? "Doomed to the butcher's axe, it is true, but yet art thou happier far than

the cannibals that devour thee!" muttered the prior, "Thy brain is not the charnel house of the past!—the madness of a thousand generations of thy kind is not accumulated in one miserable mind, and called wisdom, learning, theology! From nothing thou camest—to nothing thou returnest—without regret, without fear, without hope, indeed!—but what is hope? To me it were only a blacker despair! For if this should in sooth have been a spirit I have seen —St. Benedict's!—If the lies of doting monks, and forgers of confirmations from the unknown world, to stamp the charters valid that give us the possession of this—should have aught of reality in them, where am I? But all are false alike! Am I not myself the saint of a legend which Jacobus de Voragine—James the Swallower, indeed!—would right joyfully have chronicled in his Golden Book? But was it truly mine own seething brain shaping phantoms in the mists that arise from it as from the cauldron vallies of the wizard Hartz? Yet she also could not have melted away into air!—Yet as air she has vanished! Rather may it be the worst of all these fears —or all together—than this which now comes over me! But all is well, doubtless, above!—and by this Dan Gloria and he are safely wending tothe German Seas!"

Almost as this last reflection passed soothingly through his mind, he heard the voice of the person he named, descending from the lofty dungeon which he had now nearly reached—singing! Singing with peculiar loudness and fervour, as if purposely to attract attention—but with something of wildness, indeed of distraction in the utterance! Yet that might well be imputed to the circumstance that the words and rhythm of the song continually changed, as if the singer's agitated thoughts allowed of no perseverance in any particular strain. For example, some such words as the following were sung to the majestic movement of the Gregorian chaunt, interpolated with other incongruous snatches of ballads and melodies:—

My mother was a wise old dame, and she nodded o'er her wheel, O,
While from the drowsy cottage fire, forth in the sun I'd steal, O,
And meet my love on a sunny side among the blooming corn, O,
For it was to love, and not to spin, that ever I was born, O—

* * * *

Love, love another!—I can be
As false, or falser than thou art!
Wert thou more treacherous than the sea,
A deeper gulf is in my heart—

That thou hast fashioned me!—
I could have loved as well and true,
As all the turtle doves that bill,
But—
* * * *
And for reward of my minstrelsy
Let my only love, love only me,
And—
* * * *
Merry, tis merry! in France to go,
A yeoman stout with a bended bow,
To venge my King on his mortal foe,
And quaff the Gascon wine!
* * * *
Make me a winding sheet of snow,
Bleak wind, that hurtles around!
Grave me, and let none ever know
Who 'tis that sleeps so sound,
For another cheek has won his kiss,
And whiles I die he sleeps in bliss!
* * * *
Red are the winter berries, love!
And red the robin's breast,
But white as the snow they glint above,
Are the lips thine oft have pressed!
What matters? Fill the bridal cup,
And guests, and strangers drink it up!
* * * *
For if ever there was a joyous one,
Say what ye will, and when all is done,
To my grave, joyous I'll be!
And bury me at some gay vine-root,
That my laughing veins through its strings may shoot,
And make a gladder wine!

"What, hath she imprisoned herself with her apple-visaged apostle there or—or hath she betrayed me?" murmured the prior, and he ascended the intervening flight of stairs with precipitation—unbolted and unlocked the dungeon door, and entered it. A figure flew toward him, which suddenly halted as if struck powerless—and with looks aghast with intense and mutual query, the wife of Marchant Hunne and Prior Sancgraal stood face to face.

"Alive!"

"Alone!"

Both words were uttered together, but were so terribly distinct in tone and emphasis, even while expressive of identical sentiments; that neither auditor lost his share in the other's meaning. There was a considerable pause.

"Yes," said Dan Gloria, at last, "Yes, Sancgraal!—he hath out-cunninged us both! He put on the disguise I brought him, and suddenly gliding out of the chamber, turned the key on me, and left me alone in this fearful solitude! My cries in pursuit were in vain!—unless you have discovered and recaptured him?"

"It may well be so, if he joined the escort I provided for him—and the keys were found by Mugwort in the Sanctuary gate! Didst

thou tell him he could only leave the precincts in company of the Flemish traders?" returned the prior, breathlessly.

"Ay, but I fear me, Sancgraal!—I mean, I am certain your ruffians cannot recognise him in the garb I gave him—only myself can do so! I gave him not the forester's green habit and bow you bade me ensuit him withal. I doubted your Flemish traders might quarrel with us on the way, Sancgraal, in some lonesome inn or wood, and purposed to escape with him alone!" said Dan Gloria, adding, a little wildly, "But you bring me good news, indeed, if you say yourself have not seen him since!—if he made no attempt to enter the church, and rescue his betrothed from your toils!—Or, sacrilegious betrayer! have you slain him there?"

"Knew he aught of Lily-Virgin's being in the church with me!" gasped the agitated prior.

"Yea!—to snatch from him all hope of ever retrieving her for his own, I confessed your project to him! But is she not yours wholly now—a nun professed?" returned Dan Gloria.

"Treacherous madwoman!—and what disguise did your folly lend him? The habit of

our order?—Speak, I say!—Didst thou endue him with St. Bennet's weed?" shouted Sancgraal.

"Why dost thou need to know? It hath been worse profaned!" returned the præcentor, doggedly.

Sancgraal stood for several moments overwhelmed with crowding reflections of the most tormenting and exasperating nature; but with dark intuition, he gave expression only to that which his evil science of humanity taught him would produce the strongest effect on his miserable accomplice and victim. "Because, if so, thyself hast completed the destruction of all thine own hopes as well as of mine!—for it was one in the disguise of a monk who last night rescued Lily from my crowning and nigh successful effort at her redemption from the sorceries of his flagitious passion; and they are now doubtless laughing at heaven's and thy fruitless rivalry, in each others angelic embrace, in the Sanctuary!'

An expression of unutterable anguish writhed for a moment over Dan Gloria's visage. And then it grew calm—almost radiant and exultant—yet with a sentiment evidently in no wise connected with any degree of satisfaction in her paramour's similar defeat

and misery. It was something holier and gentler—a burst of brightness from the clouded and blackened depths of the unhappy woman's spirit that denoted the light of heaven was not all extinguished in it. "Why, so let it be, Sancgraal!—They are formed for each other—equally good, pure, and beautiful! Let us not attempt to cross heaven's will, so clearly manifest! Let them be happy in each other's beauty and sanctity! The cardinal himself will relent anon, and join their well-matched hands!"

"Ay! shall it be so? And meanwhile shall I comply with the hypocrite counterfeit's command, and wed with thee? I, Sancgraal Bigod, abbot-elect of Westminster, shall I *wed*, I say, with the refuse of the Lutheran camps of Italy, and resume my noble name and its beggared inheritance, to transmit them by such a dam to posterity?" returned Sancgraal, with indescribable bitterness and fury. "Bide here then until Ritter Sampson comes from the dungheap of carnage in which he festers, to give the bride away, Popess Dalilah!—Nay, but you must! Never grope in your bosom for the Ritter's knife!—I have it here, in mine own! Father Gislebert found it this morning, stabbed in the harmless turf of the Clois-

ters! Though how it came there, unless thou didst give it him to sheathe in the breast for which thou destinedst it heretofore, and he dropped it on the way!—or how he got into the church, unless thou hast taught him the means from his chamber, by the gallery window, treacherous hag!—defies all calculation!"

The recollections that thronged upon Dan Gloria, and painted themselves in her varying hues as these words were spoken, deprived her of the power—perhaps of the will—to attempt any refutation. Moreover her thoughts passed to a nearer consideration, observing Sancgraal about to take his departure. "Do with me what else thou wilt—if all be as thou hast said—but do not dungeon me any longer here!" she exclaimed, in piercing accents of entreaty. "O, Sancgraal! I shall madden in this chamber! Thou knowest not what a hideous night I have passed here! What howling shrieks and groans sounded in mine ears!—And at midnight there was so aghast a tragedy played before mine eyes, that these locks thou wouldst once say shamed the raven's inky gloss, will whiten ere I see another sundown!"

"You drink too much wine, Maudelyn!—Gildas himself says so!" returned Sancgraal, with sardonic calm. "The spiritual world

casts no shadows upon ours—save the one vast eclipse its fond belief makes of the cheerful sun, eternally, on all mankind! Fear not: there are no apparitions but such as liars and impostors have devised—like him who assumed to be St. Benedict last night, and fooled myself so shamefully that—but I will have vengeance yet! Meanwhile I will take care that your diet henceforth is not such as to raise these fumes in your brain!—I do not fear besides that you are likely to imitate your husband's example!—he left the rope too short!"

"Felon! he died not by his own hands!—I saw the whole acting of his tragedy last night—and I will proclaim the truth to the world!" said Dan Gloria, in the accent of desperation.

"Proclaim, proclaim! Heralds do wontedly take high stations for their solemn utterances!—and the angels will hear thee hence perchance, if they have not orders to turn their heads away whenever thou dost make speech to them! Men, methinks, will scarcely catch the sounds, from such a height above their wallowing place! And if they do, master præcentor has so long been thought a crazed one, in our Abbey, that for him to gnash his

teeth at dungeon bars is but to confirm an old opinion!"

"Devil in heart even more than in person!—but I have a voice that shall be heard below, were I as high perched as the skylark when he shows no bigger than a silvery mote in the blue!" returned Dan Gloria.

"Nay, Maudelyn, nay! teach thyself a wiser patience!" said Sancgraal, after a pause of reflection. "It is as much for thine own safety as for mine that I must keep you prisoned here awhile. For if this heretic be abroad in safety—unless thou hast well kept the secret—I fear me thou hast betrayed, sith he called thee Hunne's wife to my teeth!—he will not fail to accuse us of all that makes it most necessary to keep thy person out of scrutiny and in surety! Answer me!—is it not so? But thy darkening brow confesses without words! Be not afraid—I have been at confession too, and have not thy sex's folly for an excuse!—I alone will keep the key of your seclusion—dread not Gislebert—and this chamber, which strikes thee with dread, is in reality thy best protection! Only old men repeat themselves!—and thou sayest Gislebert did not slay Hunne! Meanwhile you may better improve your leisure than in bawling to the

tombstones down yonder! Here is my missal, adorned with masterly gravures, whose consideration may amuse your thoughts."

"No, no! Let me have the book in which Roodspere reads! I am no Latinist, to peruse these masses, that speak to such as I am in very dead tongues truly!" returned Dan Gloria.

"What book mean you? The Gospels, in the false English of Tindal of Antwerp?—It is then as I have long feared, and the strange magic of this man's misbeliefs has gained thee also, to whom they promise only dismay and despair!" said Sancgraal, with strange vehemence. "Unhappy woman, no!—If I have destroyed thee bodily, I will not also colleague against thy soul!—Forget all thou hast learned from the smooth heretic—or remember it only to make a clean confession and witnessing of his betraying doctrines when I shall summon thee to that intent!"

And Sancgraal closed the door with violence as he stepped forth, and with a hurried and trembling hand secured all the fastenings. "Let us hasten this work!" he muttered. "The fiend that hath hitherto led me on is again whispering in my ear—and the Ritter's knife is too ready in my hand!—Yet thus should I be rid for ever of this accusing pre-

sence!—For ever?—That craves proof!—And what could be done with the body?—Skeletons even have betrayed their slayers ere now!—Most cruel wretch! and canst thou even dream so barbarous a felony?—To plunge thy steel into the bosom where that young innocence nestled once, whose sweet looks did nigh redeem its wretched father's soul!—No, no; let the worst only come with the worst!—Myself only know who is the prisoner here, and in my custody surely she is safe from further betrayal!"

The prior hastened from the Gatehouse prison into the Sanctuary, passing through its dismal arch; and a very few steps placed him in the midst of those narrow and tortuous streets, into which the sunshine itself descended ever cold and shadowy. Space had become of too much value within the privileged circuit to be sacrificed to such minor conveniences as light and air. But the whole slatternly and ruffianly population were abroad in those twisted entrails of the foul city, engaged in congenial pursuits and occupations. And gloomily preoccupied as he was, the prior himself noticed the decay of the respect and homage which at one period the habit he wore never failed to command, among the wild denizens—

much more, his own mysteriously imposing personage; which he now, however, concealed as much as possible in his cowl and robe. Hucksters and fishwives hustled rudely against him—depraved women called to him in words of derision and abuse from their open windows —the ruffians and cutthroats of the Tophet swaggered past him with rude and defying gestures. Was this the result of the missionary labours of Raphael Roodspere, or signs of the universal spirit of insubordination and resistance to clerical domination, bubbling up from the very dregs of the society of the age? —Prior Sancgraal made no pause to consider the question, but passed as speedily as he could through all obstructions, until he arrived at St. Julian-of-the-Pilgrims.

It was the hour of the noonday distribution of provisions, which still continued to be made in the hospice to certain pensioners whom a convenient fiction continued to regard as pilgrims of St. Edward. Sancgraal entered the great hall, where these privileged persons were assembled with a miscellaneous throng of other inhabitants of the Sanctuary, who came, like citizens of modern London to some noted eating-house, to dine for their money. Rogue-the-Rogue, distinguished by a very Hebrew

physiognomy, and a pair of remarkably sinister projecting rat-eyes, and his waiters, were driving a brisk trade in transferring messes of savoury viands from a prodigious fire at which they had cooked them, to the platters of dozens of hungry guests. The noise and confusion were infinite; but at the entrance of the scene the prior encountered with a group that for awhile disagreeably arrested any remoter observation on his part. The Lord Bigod, strangely travestied in the greasy leather suit of the drunken deserter, who, in return, was decked out in the faded splendours of the baron's usual garb, lounged in the cavernous porch, drinking with some half-dozen ill-looking fellows, who were, however, well-armed, booted, and spurred, and among whom was Jailer Mugwort,— evidently somewhat the worse for his share in the wassail.

"Hillo! here he is, at last, to give us our orders, and a benedicite; for, my lord prior, and most brotherly brother, I have joined your free company, and intend to betake me to the glad greenwood, under their safeguard, out of merry London walls!" said Bigod, with an expression of bitter animosity mingling with all the ironical pleasantry of the address, as his dispossessed elder confronted him, with a look of calm, because settled, hatred and contempt.

"When I last saw you, Lord Bigod, you were on your way to take service with the infidels at Constantinople; you have changed your purpose suddenly!" replied Sancgraal, with an irony, cold and cutting as steel.

"Ay, because I find there is like soon to be easier plunder in England; and more than I wot well, there are buxom harems enow to be picked out of nunneries, brother prior," returned the baron. "Meanwhile, I purpose to keep mine hand in among other gentlemen, moonwalkers hereabouts, who make St. Julian's their headquarters. Never fear but you will have your tithe and toll! Rogue-the-Rogue here cannot cheat you of much when you have a brother in the secret! — and promises to supply me and my merry-men with all needful warlike store of musketoon and hanger, on secret loan, like the cardinal's aid to Bourbon in Italy!"

"You are gone mad, Lord Bigod—I should say but that I have never known you otherwise!—From your childhood you were what you are! Your lady mother called this bearing, knightly and warlike!—we poor silly monks call it ruffianly braggadocio, thus to speak, for act you will not!" returned Sancgraal, with grim tranquillity.

"And what were, and what are, you, my good lord prior?" returned the baron, scornfully. "Here is one can tell us something of your tricks in your younger days, and hath! and says he doubts not Clerk Roodspere is as cleanly conveyed into the other world by this time as ever was Marchant Hunne! And he knows as well as the eyes in his head, that it was never the treasurer who butched him then, or him now!"

"Nay, my lord!—nay, sir prior, and my lord again! I but say that forasmuch as the keys are taken from me, and I should find them hanging in the Sanctuary gate as I came home from York Place—I mean from mine errand I was sent on to the Abbey Farm, high up in St. John's Wood yonder—and forasmuch as I fell into great trouble on Marchant Hunne's account, and stood at the bar, and you may as well hang a dog as give him a bad name; forasmuch, say I, as things that happen once may happen again—and finding the keys in the gate, and Master Roodspere being my lord cardinal's baseborn, and not knowing who was murdered, and who was not—and my wife playing me false with the porkish friar, and as willing to be rid of me as ever was Mistress Hunne of her old husband—and she being strong enough and

stout enough for to keep my prisons herself, my lord prior—for if the skies were falling she is tall enough and resolved enough to prop them —I even took sanctuary until I should hear more about it, for I can prove as clear as day I was at York Place a-talking with master secretary, who is a well-spoken gentleman as ever I coped withal, while it was adoing, whatever is done! But as to murder, if all men were as innocent as I am!—why I would hardly kill a flea but for the provocation of the bite."

This was Jailer Mugwort's particularly clear and connected harangue; to which the prior listened with stern attention. "You have made this poor man drunk, and me as foolish as yourselves to listen to his ravings!" was his commentary at the conclusion. "But what say you about York Place? What dost thou say, Joakin?—or knowest thou not what thou sayest at all?"

"He went to take suit and service with the cardinal, and so will I! By heaven, were it but to vex thy proud stomach, Liulph, I will run at the cardinal's stirrup, for a footpage's hire, if he will but take me!" said Lord Bigod, with sparkling eyes.

"This garb looks not much like the cardinal's livery, howbeit, good brother," said

Sancgraal with sardonic composure. "But *ill got, ill gone*! You were enriched with mine inheritance, and have made yourself a beggar!"

"Ill got! how sayest thou ill got?" returned the ruined noble. "Because I had an elder brother as gnarled in mind as in body, was I to blame if I took the inheritance the peevish fool relinquished?"

"*Ill gone*, I said also: mark you that, fair brother!" said Sancgraal, with lighting eyes, and an inexpressible bitterness in his tones. "*Ill got and ill gone*! Your lady mother herself, who doated on her shapely boy so mother-like, will herself now scarce dispute the latter words! For how say you? Is Chepstow as merry a castle as I left it in my childhood, with so many kindly blessings on my lips? Is my good nurse still as great a favourite with madam countess—who taught me the devil had so firm a hold of me by the hoof that I could only save myself in a monastery? Good sirs, make me way! I am talking angerly which as little tallies with my purpose as my profession among ye! Go where thou wilt, Lord Bigod, to the Turks' wars or to the gallows!—My business is not with thee, but with my no less brother, Josas the Hospitaller, yonder!"

"Rogue-the-Rogue! thy brother needs

thee!" shouted Bigod, at the pitch of his voice. "Well, be not so sour, lord prior!—thou wilt have thy share of our honest gains through him doubtless, and if the red gold should show a little redder than wontedly, we wot well you have the trick to wash it clean enough in holy water!"

"Bully Bigod! by my faith thou hast the patience of nine wooden saints in their niches not to lend him a rap over the crown, though it be excommunication and sacrilege, no doubt!" muttered the deserter, in his noble comrade's ear. "How say you? Shall I do it for you, or shall we wait for that jolly time we talk of?"

"Peace, knave!—they say he is my father's son, though he is as little like him as a man should be whose father was away in the wars when he was born!" said Bigod, in a loud jeering tone; but on a sudden he felt a hand clutching his throat like a wolf-hound's jaws, and which shook him as if it would rend his tongue from his jaws; and a voice, hoarse and inarticulate with passion, yelled close to his face, "Dost thou dare to blaspheme my mother's memory, reprobate spendthrift! Swallow back thy words, or stifle with them on thy false, fleering tongue!"

"Ho, are you for this manner of hugging, master monk?" shouted Bigod, releasing himself by a violent effort, and closing with the prior. But deformed as he was, Sancgraal possessed great strength; all his powers were roused by exasperation, and the baron was already a little topheavy from his morning potations. Happen how it might, the result of the struggle was not such as could have been anticipated from a comparison of the persons of the combatants, for the Lord Bigod was sent hurled away from his brother's arms, with terrific force, into the hostelry, and, stumbling on the threshold, he fell with extreme violence against the foot of a table. In a moment his chesnut curls were bubbled over crimson; yet, though stunned for the instant, he staggered up again on his feet and prepared to renew the conflict, striking blindly in the air with fury as he came. But by this time the whole hostelry was in an uproar, and Rogue-the-Rogue, Mugwort, the deserter, and others, rushed between the belligerents. As regarded the prior, this was accomplished without much difficulty. He evidently became immediately aware of the indecorous and unchurchmanlike character of the demeanour into which he had been betrayed. But the strength of many intervening, could

scarcely keep the half-frantic younger brother from rushing again into conflict. "I am to blame, brother, forgive me!—I mistook the drift of your words, perchance! Nay, let him go, sirs!—let him trample me into the dust if he so pleases! Lo ye, I kneel to thee, son of my father, for forgiveness!" said the saintly prior; and, in fact, he suited the gesture to the word.

"Ay, this was always thy trick!—fraud when force might not serve! But men are to be cheated by the monks' apings no more! Thou shalt pay me for this blood in the like good stuff, if it be true that thine is a Bigod's! Look what he has done, sirs!" ejaculated the young lord, drawing his hand through his close locks, and sending a shower of gore through his fingers on the ground. But he became very sick and dizzy at the same instant, and staggered back in the arms of his numerous friends, who immediately conveyed him to a bench at a side table, applying the only remedies their skill suggested, in the shape of strong drink, and a saddle-band for a bandage.

Sancgraal took advantage of the first lull to address the master of St. Julian's concerning the business on which he came. Affecting to take no further notice of Bigod and his adhe

rents, he called to Rogue-the-Rogue by the title of Brother Josas. "Brother Josas!" he said, and paused, while a dark sweat burst in heavy dews on his brows. "Last night—last night—did not one of our brotherhood—alack the cowl makes not the monk!—come hither with —with—with a young girl in his company, in —oh, sacrilege!—in the habit of a novice of St. Mary?"

Brother Josas paused in his reply, evidently greatly embarrassed. But there was that in his patron's looks so energetically enforcing the query, he did not venture on any subterfuge. "My Lord, yea!" he replied, yet with hesitation. "And, truly, I urged your holy regulation to the contrary, and warned him of the heaviness of the fine! But in the midst of my reasoning, I was called away—and I left them with a crazy priest up there, who, I thought, would give him better counsel, for he is always prating of a reformation in men's ways and manners. And I have thought nothing of them since, in my extreme business!"

There was an instant of silence. Little of Sancgraal's visage could be seen in the shadow of the hood, which, after the ruffle of the late conflict, he had again drawn over it; but all the auditors started at the tone of

his voice when he replied:—"Go, and bring the monk and the woman before me! Ye who are true vassals of the church, assist the hospicer therein!"

"Were it not best to speak with the offender privately, my lord? He will pay the heavier fine for secrecy!" whispered Brother Josas to the superior.

"Secrecy! Thou knowest not!—this is a matter of sacrilege! The woman is indeed a novice of our Lady!" returned the prior, with strange ferocity. "No, no, I will abide them here! Go, and bring them hither. They cannot 'scape, tis true, for I have the keys of the Gatehouse in my vest. But if resistance be made, use whatever force is needful—even to the death!—should our sinful brother resist so far!"

Rogue-the-Rogue made a signal to certain of his attendants, and left the hall of the hostel with them on the errand, while the majority of the Sanctuary wassailers awaited the result in wondering expectation, gathered together in knots. Sancgraal speedily became nearly alone in the porch where he had stationed himself, while his more popular brother was environed by a crowd of sympathisers. No long delay took place; no resistance

—possibly no reluctance — was displayed by the accused in appearing before the tribunal they ought apparently so much to have dreaded. Brother Josas returned in a very brief space with three persons in his company, only one of whom came with any visible degree of hesitation. And she indeed—for it was a youthful female, closely veiled, and in a novice's dress, came in, leaning on her alleged abductor's arm—with but such marks of tremulous courageousness as a virgin martyr of the pagan times might have shown, about to be cast into an arena of wild beasts. But he whose arm sustained her steps was no monk, and no longer wore the disguise of one. It was Raphael Roodspere, in his usual garb. The third prisoner, a voluntary one—if those with whom he came were to be considered as such against their wills—was Bilney.

"Gloria Patri, lord prior!—I did mistake me in the dark! It is a secular priest and his leman, and none of our brotherhood!" said Josas, introducing the parties with an evident expectation that his news were of a satisfactory kind.

Sancgraal covered his brows with his hands for an instant, and the heavings of his chest, though no sound was audible, indicated a

degree of convulsive emotion, which it required no ordinary amount of nerve to control. Yet he mastered it after a brief internal struggle. "It is as I thought!" he then observed, with apparent calmness. "These are the escaped and felonious heretic, Raphael Roodspere—the betrayed and lost novice of our Lady, Lily Paulet! But retribution is at hand! — Convey him back to the jail from which he broke last night on this detestable enterprise, Josas, and where he was lodged by the king's own command! I myself will take the wretched girl home to her fitting canonical penances in Clerkenwell!"

"You shall do so at some peril, my lord prior!" returned the unshaken tones of Raphael Roodspere. "For, firstly, it were to break a heavenly ordinance, to sunder those whom God has joined—and this lady, Lily Paulet, is my lawfully wedded wife; Here is one who united us, can testify the same!"

"I wedded them last night, on the stroke of midnight, with all rights and ceremonial belonging unto matrimony, falsely styled a sacrament!" said Bilney, in the like calmly resolute tones. A long silence ensued.

"As good marriages are made at witches'

sabbaths—by leaping over a black ram!—But, Master Bilney, I do acknowledge you to be a proper priest at such a celebration! And, truly, *this* sacrament is none!" said the prior at last, with supernatural tranquillity of utterance. "Neither is it therefore any offence, but a work holy as almsgiving, to separate such a pair! Daughter Lily, will you go with me quietly, or must I use force?"

"I claim sanctuary—sanctuary with my husband, Raphael Roodspere!" replied the wontedly timorous and still low-toned, but now wonderfully resolute voice of Lily-Virgin.

"We claim sanctuary, both!—All three claim, and are, in sanctuary! Sirs, will ye allow your privileges to be broken, and your immunities to be held forfeit, or will ye defend them in our persons?" said Roodspere, turning to the listening and breathlessly excited throng.

"We will defend our privileges to the death! We will defend the Cardinal's son to the death!—The good lad who will smoke the hive for us, and his bonny leman, to the death!" shouted the Lord Bigod, suddenly leaping from a seeming state of insensibility upon the table, and, amidst the wildest uproar, constituting himself the mouthpiece of what

instantaneously became a predominant popular sentiment. "Ho, brave fellows, all!—all of ye who would keep your own necks safe out of halters and pillories, speak with one accord! Will ye maintain your privileges or no? Sanctuary, or no sanctuary, shall it be, against the world? My jolly foresters, stand by me!—this will be better worth our while than stalking deer in Windsor glades, or fat citizens on Epsom Downs!"

The reply was almost universal—a roar of tumultuous assent, such as only a popular assembly, agitated by a mighty and general impulse, can affix to its fiats! But the deserter's stentor tones were audible amid all the tumult. "I make a second, Bully Bigod, come what will of it!"

Sancgraal stiffened his frame upright, and looked around at the surging throng—far from experiencing any loss of courage, evidently with a full resumption of all his natural audacity and supremacy of character. "Sirs, hear me!" he exclaimed, stretching his arm, and standing abruptly forward like a withered pine on the way—and the audience he claimed was in a manner irresistibly accorded him. "My demand violates none of your privileges—the sanctuary of the

church protects only from human, not from divine justice! This man is a heretic priest—this woman is a nun professed in all but public vows! Their offences are of the church's cognisance only—and in her name I demand them at your hands!"

There was a silence—evidently of perplexity—among the tumultuous auditory. "Let the supreme authority of the church—let the Cardinal Legate—demand us, and mayhap we will yield to his summons!" said Roodspere. "Until then, it is to the jeopardy of all if we are in anywise assailed!"

"We will defend our privileges with our lives! To arms, sanctuary men! and let us keep our rights with our strong right hands!" shouted Bigod, leaping on the floor, and drawing a weapon with a frantic flourish. "Who says, nay? Turn out the throttling prior, who would try his old godsire's Hunneish tricks upon us all in turn, and let us show we are in earnest, sirs!"

The Lord Bigod was a personal favourite with all the wildest ruffianage of the city of refuge. Roodspere's character and discourses had conciliated a general regard, and almost affection, to his person. Prior Sancgraal was as generally disliked and dreaded, in spite, or

perhaps in consequence, of the austerity and rumoured sanctity of his character. All combined with even the facts of the recent assault, to produce more than even a general and uproarious assent to Bigod's proposition; and such a storm of yells and hootings arose against the prior, that it was with difficulty the object of the favourable popular manifestation himself, could obtain a partial cessation while he addressed some words to his antagonist. Their purport reached only few persons, and those could scarcely discern the significance of Roodspere's observation. "If you seek to punish any and all manner of seduction and sacrilege, go and offer yourself, lord prior, to whatever chastisement the woful tenant of Hunne's dungeon can impose upon you! By *her* resolution only shall mine be guided! If she pardons, and departs with you for ever from Westminster, so also will I preserve your terrible secrets for ay! If not, I will proclaim to all the world what truly you are—and *she*, I doubt not, will testify of the same!"

Sancgraal gazed for some moments with the glare of a caged panther from within its bars, as powerlessly, with the like thirst for destruction in his heart. But Roodspere's wontedly

clear and serene visage was now all charactered over with as it were a wizard's spell, whose hieroglyphs being shown rebuke the stoutest fiend into terror and obedience. "Well, sir!" the prior said at last, relaxing from his gaze, and dropping it on the bending figure beside Roodspere. "Well, sir, you have spoken well and wisely for yourself! But what answers this pretended bride of yours, the once Lily of the Virgin? Ay, answer for thyself here as at a future time thou shalt and must at the bar of eternal judgment, when the diamond-armoured legions of heaven throng around their king to listen to the reply of the once dedicated handmaiden of our Lady! Remember the plight thou didst vowingly accept in the crypt of Holy Mary of Clerkenwell, and answer me,—resolvest thou now to become—out and alas! that word already is too late perchance—the adulteress of the living God?"

During the utterance of this appeal, concluding with so terrific a denunciation, Lily-Virgin cowered as if under some physical pressure; and when the last words heaped their thunder on her senses, she became altogether overpowered, and would undoubtedly have sunk to the ground but for Roodspere's saving arms. Shrieks that seemed stifling like knives in her heart then

burst from her lips—shrieks of terror mingled with ejaculations for mercy from the stern and motionless prior—with the most heartrending appeals to Roodspere for protection—with we know not what frenzy of superstition, mingled with the most passionate love and confidence in him—which alternately worked the hearts of both the men, indeed of all present, into a corresponding delirium of feeling. "Villanous monk!" shouted Roodspere, at length, losing all considerations and recollections but one. "Leave us, I say! Return to the chamber of murdered Hunne, and take thence his wife, and thy paramour, in her disguise of the chorister Dan Gloria-in-Excelsis! But let not thy barbarous and perfidious heart contrive aught against her, for the cardinal himself shall demand her at your hands, as the main testimony of his innocence in the matter of the Lord Percy and Mistress Anne! For myself, and this my dearest wife—when he shall see to what a madness you have brought her—were himself of marble and of brass, he will snap all the rusty chains of your superstitions, even by their own power, and release her from every false plight and pledge in which your craft has bound her!"

"We must be prepared for every scandal and calumny, can be heaped upon us; and how

false is this! when himself knoweth that last night the treacherous Italian of whom he speaks, won by his wicked sire's gold, or by worse arts, set him free from our prison, and abides now with him in some secret lurking place, known best, doubtless, to themselves, in the Sanctuary!" returned Sancgraal, and his visage as he spoke shone and glowed in the depths of the cowl like the redhot mask of a fiend. "Sirs! are these the manner of men and women whom ye will protect from the vengeance of God and man?"

A deep murmur, but expressive of incredulity, rather than of any other sentiment, sounded like a gathering surge over the assemblage, and continued to rise in violence and power until once more rebuked by the vehement gesture and voice of Sancgraal. "Rebellious caitiffs, and abettors of heresy!" he cried, in a voice that overpowered all the uproar, as the boatswain's shrieking pipe masters the noise of a tempest. "Keep then your heretics and your sanctuary!—but until ye surrender them I pronounce ye all accursed and excommunicate! I place ye under the interdict and ban of the church, and give ye altogether into the power of the devils that brought ye hither! *In nomine Domini et Sancti Edwardi*, I pronounce and ratify the curse! Amen, amen!"

Then amidst a deathly and overawed stillness, Sancgraal strode to the open portal, shook the dust of St. Julian's from his feet, or raised it in violent imitation of the scriptural injunction, and quitted it before the populace recovered from the effect of this unexpected turning of the tables. And before they could sufficiently rally to renew any expression of opinion, Prior Sancgraal completed his exit, with the suddenness of a disappearance, from the midst of his revolted vassalage.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SHRINE OF ST. EDWARD.

"And was it for this—was it to give to a baseborn heretic's polluting hands, that I watched this most delicate flower from its earliest bud—secluded it, at risks so infinite, from all the world—grudged almost to promise it to the visioned Lord of Light himself?" If Prior Sancgraal's thoughts could have taken audible sound, words like these would have been their expression, as with a heart on fire every evil passion — confused, exasperated, maddened—he emerged beneath the archway of the Gatehouse—"And this woman—this woman, who, but that they are madman's fables all, I could believe is not Hunne's wife, but a fiend disguised in the form to drag me from crime to crime into perdition!—shall she remain to complete my destruction? No, I must be quit for ever of this nightmare of my guilt, this living spectre of the past! Curses upon her, harlot of the camps, betrayer!—But what should I not curse? Parents, kinsfolk? They thrust me out of the shining world into these noisome piles of darkness, builded and

hewn into architectural shapes, to *live death!* The Cain, my brother?—who has slain me alive, and inherits me uncoffined! These swinish monks?—who seek but pretexts to desert me, for leave still to wallow peaceably in their mire! This brutish mob?—who one day worship, and the next dash their idols into pieces! Myself? Shall I not curse myself? What need! I was accursed from my birth; nature herself pronounced a malediction upon me ere I saw the light! And if indeed punishment dogs the heels of offence, what heavier damnation can I heap upon myself than I have already deserved? Yet who can be pardoned that keeps the fruit of his sin?—There is canonical teaching for it!—But how to rid myself of the body of this death that clings around me?"

He mused for some moments with dreadful profundity, then raised his eyes, and glared at the now full and cloudless noonday sun—then at the closed porches of the church, which he had ordered not to be opened for the customary services, lest Lily-Virgin might possibly still be concealed within the walls. A thought then passed, darker than the midnight shadow of a churchyard yew-tree, over his visage; he turned, closed, and barred the gate of the Sanctuary after him, and entered the Gate-

house. Long Meg and the idiot jailer only were there; the latter engaged in platting a straw chain with singular mechanical dexterity of imitation. Addressing the former, the prior quietly informed her that he had discovered her husband drunk in the Sanctuary, and that he had ascertained he had either contrived or connived at the escape of his heretic prisoner. He desired her therefore to go and bring him immediately before himself, for examination and judgment. Long Meg, who of all mankind only dreaded the gloomy priest, alarmed with the consciousness of her own more positive share in the transaction, and willing enough that the consequences should be attributed to her spouse, obeyed without hesitation—so that in a few instants Sancgraal alone, and the idiot turnkey, remained in the Gatehouse. Indifferent to the presence of the latter, the prior then hurried up to Dan Gloria's prison in the tower.

He entered with so little noise of bolt or bar, that he disturbed not the unhappy captive in her occupation, and he found her kneeling, as if intently engaged in prayer. Unwilling to startle her, he called her name gently, and she leaped upon her feet at the sound, gazing at him with fear-distended and bloodshot eyes; and then retreating wildly into a corner, she

suddenly turned like some desperate animal at bay, and seemed preparing for a mortal struggle with her foe.

"What ails thee, Maudelyn? I come to save thee—to remove thee from this dismal haunt!" said Sancgraal, in his most soothing tones—and there were times when his voice was full of cajoling harmony and tenderness. "Indeed, I find it is to mine own grievous danger if thou tarry any longer here! Raphael Roodspere has wedded his Lily in the Sanctuary—a renegade priest of his own misbelief has united him—and on condition that he set him right in the king's opinion, the cardinal has consented to pardon all, and permit their union! He has named you as his informant and witness—discovered your sex, and name, and all our conjoint infamy! He would sacrifice all man and womankind else to keep himself securely in the enjoyment of his possessed paradise of love!—and delivers you without scruple to the racks and tortures of the cardinal—to the overwhelming shame and punishment that awaits us both, if his accusations are confirmed by the discovery of your person!"

Dan Gloria stared with wild incredulity at the prior. "Why then," she exclaimed at last, with a dreadful laugh, "you should have

stolen on my sleep to murder me—not on my prayer; or deemed ye I was at my Paternosters, like Friar Gildas, pattering them in a dream?"

"I come, I tell thee, to set thee free—and for ever!" returned Sancgraal, with vehemence. "Here is thy weapon again; wield it in thy defence, as thou knowest well how, if I make assault on thee." And he gave into her quivering and scarcely-outstretched hand, whose very nerves and muscles seemed incredulously held back, the dangerous steel which to place in her frantic grasp, appeared little wiser than to give a firebrand to a madman. Yet, slowly approaching it, she clutched the hilt, at last, with convulsive energy, and stared, with evidently revived confidence, in expectation of what was to follow.

"Yes, Maudelyn, you must hence, or remain to confirm all the worst lies of the London heretics, and complete the ruin of the foundations of the church in the monastic orders!" he continued. "Consent only to leave the Abbey and retire into France—to Paris, which contented you so well erewhile! There you may resume your sex's garb, and, sith you are still in love with carnal delights, and think never to repent you of the sin by

which both of us fell, you will find there great plenty of lascivious paramours who, for your beauty and rare wit, and lavish gifts of melody, will heap upon you all manner of sensual pleasaunce and satisfactions of the appetite! Meanwhile, old Gislebert's money-bags shall show weak and flabby awhile to supply you with all needful purveyance. How say you; will you hence, and leave me some hope yet to sustain the battle with our enemies?"

Dan Gloria's visage grew of an unearthly pallor, and her eyes strained upward till only the glazed whites were visible. "Merciful father! but this is just!" she murmured. "When, as the condition of reconciliation with Richard Hunne, I swore, in Thy terrible name, never to return to Westminster Abbey—then, as my punishment should I break that plight, these words of a demon betrayer were cast in molten lead to be poured now into my soul!—No, Sancgraal, no! My Dalilah days are over, and, like thyself, I purpose to devote the remainder of my time to penitential exercises, and mortification of the flesh!"

"Is this a time for jesting, madwoman, when I have, perhaps, the start of the cardinal's executioners only by a few sands in the hourglass?" returned Sancgraal, but still restraining the deadly ferocity lurking in his

utterance. "Why then, go, if thou wilt, to Rome again!—on as many holy pilgrimages as might redeem all the souls of the Lutherans who fell in that impious siege!—go and gather again the white roses at Bethlehem, whose sweet scent cures every spiritual ailment!—Sorrow, remorse, dread—nothing more of these tormentors wilt thou know then!—the fiendish pincers cannot rend thy heart any more!—Wilt thou go to Bethlehem?"

"Wilt thou go, also, and pluck poppies in the Field of Blood, where Judas burst?" returned Dan Gloria. "No, Sancgraal!—still less this. Since I have abode in this haunted solitude, the words of that blessed clerk, which formerly I treasured up only for the music of their utterance, have come back upon me in strange significances. I will not go to Rome, to win pardon at the feet of a man who cannot even protect himself from a plump of German spears!"

"Go where and how thou wilt, then!—only leave Westminster," said Sancgraal, calmly, yet with intense inward anxiety. "Why shouldst thou tarry longer here, with a paramour whom thou hast discarded and betrayed, to be the means of completing the security and happiness of thy rival with her lover? But is all, indeed, so utterly forgotten—the

memory of the sweet innocent you almost dared teach call Sancgraal Bigod father—that you would give me now to destruction?"

"What would you have me do?—what can be done?" murmured Dan Gloria, in a moved and wo-begone accent. "And yet it was with as kindly a voice he commended me to the protection of the saints, when he left me in the dungeons of Aventine! No; I will not budge a step from Westminster, under any pretence or fear!"

"I ask it not; thou shalt tarry in the very heart of Westminster until means for a secure flight can be devised," said Sancgraal. "Let but the cardinal's searchers depart without finding you, and—and all will be well! I would conceal you where the fiend himself would fear to do you harm—in the shrine of St. Edward, under his own blessed corpse!"

"Within the shrine!" echoed Dan Gloria.

"I doubt not that to thee, as to most others," continued Sancgraal, carefully shunning to encounter Dan Gloria's eyes, "the mausoleum on which St. Edward's coffin rests, appears a solid mass of masonry, wrought in crushed marbles, gold dust, and precious inlay of many eastern stones, which only the trumpet of doom can rend open! But I, who read the secrets of Abbot Ware's magic pavements,

know this, among others, that the solid sides of the mausoleum will open, and receive you into safety, on application of a power I wield!"

"Safety! — in a sepulchre!—Ay, men are safe enough in the grave," returned Dan Gloria, gazing at the prior fixedly, and yet vacantly, as if in a dream.

"It is not a sepulchre! It is a strong chamber, purposely contrived to conceal the most valued treasures of our altars, when need arose—known only to our doting abbot, the treasurer and prior of the monastery, now, or at any season, by good rule!" replied Sancgraal.

"But how say you for air? Do they breathe in sepulchres without air?" said Dan Gloria.

"The entrance, which is in the manner of a marble portcullis, can easily be left so raised as to admit all needful breathing! Moreover, since I must confess all, the chamber is already fitted with divers spiracles contrived for the unseen observation of the shrine, and noting of the vows made to the saint! The faintest whisper can be heard within it from without, and, doubtless, without it from within—yet no suspicion surmise a place of refuge there! Cromwel and his myrmidons, whose warrant I have just refused, but which will be enforced,

will weary of their useless search—and again, I say, all will be well!"

"But thou knowest, Sancgraal!—since *that* hour I have never ventured to enter the Chapel of St. Edward, yet have ever felt as if some hideous punishment awaited me in it! It seems to me as if I snuffed blood on the threshold!—and that I were but a sheep following the butcher to his block!—Let me go into the Sanctuary!" said Dan Gloria, in an irresolute and beseeching tone.

"The musty kings do indeed stifle the air, and make it smell as deathly as themselves—that is all!" replied Sancgraal. "But for the Sanctuary! Roodspere and his bride are there, and it is in arms in his behalf, and he would be the first to hand you over to our enemies!"

"And deem you so? But I know thou sparest for no lies to serve thy purposes!—thou hast been taught from thy childhood how false gold, stamped with a true mintage, passes current with men!" she replied, with wild vehemence; but, after a moment's ghastly thought, muttered, "yet I might as easily—nay, much more easily—be slaughtered here!—And to shun such another night—and this dagger, too!—Doth Cromwel seek for me, and Roodspere give me to destruction?—oh, anything to save his beloved, no doubt!—I would have

done the same!—And what hath he not already hazarded?—And they are wedded now!—The shrine should be a holy place to this man—even to this man! Be it as thou hast said!—I will trust in thy promises, Sancgraal, and take refuge in the very tomb of St. Edward!"

"Let us hasten then—we have already lost much precious time!" replied Sancgraal, yet dissembling the excess of his eagerness. "It is now noonday, and the brethren are all at gossip and refection—no strangers are in the precincts, for I have ordered the gates not to be unbarred! — Let us hence instantly to the shrine!"

Dan Gloria gave an irresolute glance around the dungeon; and as her eye traversed its various dismal features, and retreated shuddering from the dangle of the rifted rope, stirred by a chance breeze, she gave a mechanical sign of compliance, and Sancgraal eagerly led the way forth. But as he opened the door he was somewhat startled to perceive that Smiling Willie was there, bending nearly double, with his eye at the keyhole. But far from showing any signs of alarm at the detection of his curiosity, he exclaimed, rubbing his hands with apparent satisfaction. "Uh, ay!—it *is* the devil!—it is the devil with the cloven hoof!—They cannot hang us now for strangling him for I see him plainly this time!"

"But they can nail thy tongue to the door-post, for speaking of aught thou hast seen or known!" returned the prior, sternly. "And remember, good lad! one said it that hath the power to keep his word!"

They left the idiot jailer still rubbing his hands, grinning, and looking after them with lacklustre orbs — and Sancgraal thought it advisable to take the precaution of bolting the doors of the passages they descended, to prevent him from following. In a few minutes the twain stood under the broad sunshine, in the deserted cemetery of the Abbey, and Sancgraal endeavoured to hurry across it as swiftly as possible. But whether the sufferings she had undergone, and lack of sustenance, or some warning of her better angel, delayed her steps, Dan Gloria lingered strangely on the way. And while the prior unlocked the northgate, his silently observant glance noted how long, and as it were passionately, she gazed upward at the sun, riding in his meridian splendour, in the blue and cloudless autumn sky. A pang of unutterable anguish and remorse also clove through his heart as he turned, and with a fearful smile, meant to be kindly and encouraging, invited Dan Gloria to enter—into safety! She looked at him—half drew back her hesitating step—but suddenly a loud hammering and

noise was audible at the gate towards the palace. "It is Cromwel and the cardinal's yeomen!" exclaimed Sancgraal — and she entered!

The church was apparently entirely deserted, and they traversed the space to the Chapel of St. Edward with rapid steps. Yet, when they reached the foot of the flight of stairs leading up to it, Dan Gloria again made a halt. "What dost thou fear?" said Sancgraal, even playfully, "and dost thou indeed fear to face St. Edward, who hast stood with me unblenchingly in the Holy Sepulchre?—Yea, taken tooth and nail part in the struggle with the Greek schismatics for the entrance!—Or dost thou believe the tale, that St. Edward walks?"

"Poor Richard Hunne!—felt he as I now do when he entered the Gatehouse?—And I do remember me, the savage lance-knight, Sampson, who had the courage of the wild boar that was his cognisance, did quake and tremble even as I now do, when he stepped out of his tent to meet the iron ball from St. Angelo!" murmured Dan Gloria.

"This fellow's heresies have very utterly dismayed your courage!—Or you are faint for lack of food!—There is wine in my vase above!" said the prior, soothingly, and lending his aid, almost with a degree of force,

to ascend the steps. Dan Gloria sighed deeply—dipped her hand in the holy-water basins—and then, on reflection, tossed it off in a spray, with something of disdain in her manner.

Sancgraal opened the strong-barred door that admitted into the chapel—and then a sound suddenly arrested his attention, and he perceived with little satisfaction, Father Gislebert kneeling before it, applying a lash or discipline to his bared shoulders, and muttering a rhapsody of prayers in accompaniment. But after a moment's thought, Sancgraal advanced towards him, making a gesture to Dan Gloria to move quietly to the opposite side of the shrine. "I sought you, father!" he then observed, in a loud and peremptory manner. "I desire that you will instantly summon a full chapter of the brethren, in the Chapter-house, to hear what I must unfold to them!—The prisoner has escaped—and I have placed the Sanctuary, which shelters him, under an interdict!"

"Escaped? Thrice holy Edward!— Madman!—is it Hunne's tragedy again?" exclaimed the aghast old man.

"What dost thou mean, Master Treasurer? Are your brains gone wool-gathering?" re-

turned Sancgraal, nevertheless taken wonderfully aback with the words.

"Nay, not again— not again!— he could not think it would pass the new eyes of men as of old it did!" continued Gislebert, somewhat wanderingly. "But what shadow was this that crossed the light!—that entered with you, Sancgraal? Your mother's ghost perchance!—saw ye nought?— Nay, 'tis not the first time it hath appeared to me—and here!"

"Gislebert, you are old—and these fancies gain upon you!" said Sancgraal, with great asperity. "Leave the chapel, I pray you, and summon the brethren as I have said, while I give a few moments' devotion to St. Edward!"

"And yet thou maskest in his robes!— Is not that a mockery?" said Gislebert, still rather vacantly.

"You rave, good father!— Be content to think I know the duties of mine office, and do nothing that is not ordained by a mightier power than any the frail arm of man can wield, or withstand!"

He spoke truth, though not in the sense of the mystical import he wished to attach to his words, in the old man's credulity.

"Well!—Why do you not expel yonder wine-

flown Italian from the bounds, as I have oft prayed you? — Yet methinks, after all, I could be well content to see him again!— Where is he?" said Gislebert, with a look of piercing and agitated inquiry full in Sancgraal's face.

"He hath not ventured to return since the feastday, and his shameful travesty!— He is far enough ere now over the seas, no doubt?—Why should you ever seek so bitterly his harm?" returned Sancgraal, in raised tones.

"No matter—if *he* is gone!" said the treasurer, with a deep sigh. "But whither?—Be not impatient, son!—I know now it is your turn to command, and mine to obey!—I shall not call you son again, lord prior!—I am old, I wot, and should set the rest example—I go to the chapter-house—O, blessed saints! how do your judgments come to pass!" he faintly murmured to himself as he left the chapel. "And, oh, unhappy Aveline, how hath this heir of our guilt avenged it upon both!"

"And now—this is the place!— The old dotard, who is ever plaining him of your presence, is gone!" said Sancgraal, passing round the massive sarcophagus to the side where Dan Gloria stood, gazing at its exterior in sombre meditation. Unwilling to allow too

much time for thought, the prior instantly proceeded to explain his meaning practically.

The shrine of St. Edward, like the masses of the great temple of which it is the core, in our day is stripped of its pomp of ornaments, bruised and battered—but still it preserves a ponderous and gloomy grandeur of its own, which neither time nor the pillagers of Henry VIII., have availed to destroy. The feretory of rich masonry is all that remains of the three storys, or tiers, on the topmost of which reposed the Confessor's hallowed bones, in the sarcophagus plated with gold, whose shimmer shone like a perpetual moonlight over the Chapel of the Kings. Its once magnificent inlay of precious stone, "of jasper, onyx, sardonyx, lapis lazuli, and gems of inestimable value," is defaced all over by the plunderer's chisel rather than by the strokes of that slow geologist, Time, who puts so little value on his most laboriously hewn specimens! The inscriptions in gold letters which once scrolled the shrine over, like that of an oriental santon, are nearly all obliterated. The most diligently-spectacled antiquary can scarcely now distinguish the words, recording the date of St. Edward's demise and consequent glorification! *Moriens* 1065. *Super, æthera. scandit. Sursum corda*!

Below this inscription were and are three deepset arches in the mausoleum, surrounded with a rich chain ornament; which were appropriate for sick devotees to lie in, when they came to make proof of the miraculous sanative powers effused from the sepulchre of the holy king. The middle one had, and has, a series of six holes, shaped like bees with expanded wings. Sancgraal drew a species of winch, or key, curiously shaped, to correspond, from his breast, and elaborately working at each hole in succession, drew some massive internal bolts, which in conclusion allowed him to open the apparently solid mass, at a little door, and reveal a dark sepulchral interior.

"This is the chamber, still Maudelyn mine! —what dost thou gaze at so stedfastly?" said Sancgraal, perhaps surprised at the deep revery in which his intended victim continued plunged, for several minutes after he had completed the work.

"At those twisted columns that support the whole huge marble mass!—Are they not like serpents, Sancgraal?" she murmured in reply.

"You are faint, poor child!—I should have thought ere now of your long fast," said Sancgraal, compassionately. "And lo ye, here are bread and wine—and in the goblet and

ewer that stood godfathers to Liulph Bigod, and christened him after themselves—here, in the vessels of the Sancgraal!" And the prior produced from amidst the numerous treasures displayed on the shrine, a golden chalice, half filled with some rich red wine, placed in the salver from which he derived his singular designation. This was a very extraordinary crystal, or possibly an artificial petrifaction, almost as hard as diamond, but wrought, probably by some ancient Byzantine artist, into fine chasings, as it were, in silver or other submissive metal, enclosing in the hollow of the basin about half a dozen pebbles of a singular quality — perfectly limpid and transparent, when viewed in a perpendicular light, but changing to glowing rubies in any other. It was not certainly at all difficult for the possessors of this inestimable relic, when such was their pleasure, to give the holy wafers placed in the salver a miraculous hue that, in the opinion of the credulous, visually asserted the dogma of transubstantiation!

Dan Gloria took the goblet thus offered her with visible hesitation. "Nay, Sancgraal, nay!—I will not drink!—For whom was this draught prepared?" she then observed, with evident suspicion, and replacing it on the salver.

"For Lily-Virgin!—for her absolution from the heretic seducer's spells, as I deemed!—It may, at least, serve for thine!" replied Sancgraal. "Certes it were no ill preparation for whatever may betide—for I know not whether even thus we can elude the lynx eyes of Cromwel! Kneel and make confession, Maudelyn, and I will shrive and absolve you up to this hour as white as a sheep at shearing-time!"

"No, Sancgraal, no!—If this man's teaching have illumined my mind with truth, or darkened it with deeper error, I know not; but I believe no longer in the efficacy of this rite!—How can I, thou administering it?" returned Dan Gloria, continuing, in a strain of dreary solemnity, "And also thus, if thou purpose any treason to me, and believest in thine own rede, thou knowest now that thou slayest body and soul together if thou slayest either in me! But surely, surely," she resumed, looking at him with a pathetic intensity of expression that might have melted a tiger preparing to rend its prey, could it have comprehended, as Sancgraal did, all the agony and supplication in those once gorgeous orbs! "Oh, surely, it is not in nature—it is not even in thee!—to consign one whom you have so loved to eternal pains!—for who can repent of a life in a few brief hours?"

"I could not harm thee, if I would!" replied the prior, suppressing all exterior manifestation of the tremendous emotions in his breast. "What dost thou fear?—Thou art armed!—A whisper within the shrine were audible to all without; and this chapel, as thou knowest, is a place of as constant resort to the multitude as the seabeach to the waves!—Take the key, without which it cannot be fastened, within with thee—and it is but playing at hide-and-seek with our enemies again, in a dusty cupboard!—Why, there is good company within!" he continued, with a ghastly smile. "The Confessor's chaste queen, Editha—Empress Maud, thy namesake—and the cedar chest wherein we placed the skeleton of Catherine of France, that was grandmother of all the Tudors, and wife of the great Henry yonder with the silver head!"

"And hath *he*, indeed, betrayed me unto this?—I have deserved it all!—And yet it is the keenest stroke of all!" said Dan Gloria, drearily. "And must I then crawl living into my grave?"

"Madwoman, no! Since you persist in this raving, remain forth, and surrender yourself and me to the fangs of the Cardinal, and let the destruction of the church be, in good part, a woman's work, as was prophesied of old!"

exclaimed Sancgraal, with furious vehemence, and turning as if to leave the chapel, when Dan Gloria caught him by his robe.—"Tarry!—If thou wilt swear to me, by all thine own hopes of mercy, here, or hereafter, to come the moment that Cromwel has departed, and set me loose—I will enter the mausoleum, and abide my time to come forth!"

"I swear it—the moment that I can with safety let thee forth, I will! But it remains at thine own pleasure to hazard coming forth, at any moment of the time!" returned Sancgraal.

"On this condition then, farewell, Sancgraal, until—until we meet again!" said Dan Gloria, trembling convulsively, and in a voice half-stifled by sobs. "But O, Sancgraal, by all the memory of the past—by the tears we twain have shed together for our dead child, whom for thy sake I deserted, and so slew!—be not so merciless as to deceive me now!—How shall I meet Hunne's eyes in the fiery wildernesses, if, as thou sayest, he wanders there for his unrepented heresies! Remember, I am in mortal sin if Raphael Roodspere's lessons are of heresy—and harm me not!"

"Dost thou see?—I do not often weep—yet these are tears," said Sancgraal: and, indeed, some dreadful drops distilled from his burning eyes. "Well, well, I will not ask it any more!

—Let us furnish the overwhelming proof our enemies need, in thy presence, and do thou bring me to the destruction I have perchance deserved—but not at thy hands!"

"Give me the wine—I lack strength even to crawl in and die!—I will drink now," said Dan Gloria, gaspingly, and the prior hastened to hand the cup to her. She drained it at a single draught, while Sancgraal's silent lips appeared to tremble with some mental utterance—perhaps, for who can fathom the depths of superstition, in her most cavernous hollows of atheistic doubt?—perhaps murmuring the absolutory formula of his church over her!—Almost immediately after she grew very ghastly pale, and staggered against the shrine. "Ah! wicked monk!—wouldst thou have given her this sleepy mandragora which makes all night around me now? But thy chastisement is yet to come! Help, heaven, help!—Raphael, Raphael, saidst thou not that the good thief who repented even on the cross—oh, where am I?"

She sunk senseless, thus speaking, on the rich pavement of the chapel; and without an instant's hesitation, Sancgraal stooped, and possessed himself of the dagger. "We will have no blood shed in the church," he muttered; "Should she revive ere—should she turn des-

perate and—but we must care for that! We! —who are we? Come, thou who listenest!—whether she be thy emissary or no, and assist me in this work!" He drew Dan Gloria's exanimate body as he spoke, in a violent trail, to the sepulchre—a tiger who would have his prey safely in the depths of the jungle! He entered it first, crawling in on his hands and knees, turned, and drew the powerless frame in after him—reappearing, after a brief interval, covered with rusty dust and cobwebs. Then, without hesitating in his further task, he stepped out of the chapel by one of the altar doors, and returned with a silver brazier, used for heating the censers, which was nearly filled with charcoal. He lighted it with the aid of flints conveniently placed on it, blew the charcoal into a glow which yet scarcely equalled that of his own murtherous eyes—and placed the vase deliberately within the mausoleum. The reflection lighted the interior with an infernal glare, and revealed the prostrate form of Dan Gloria, who lay with her eyes staring wide open, seeming to be unable to utter any sound, but to have some tremendous, dream-like consciousness of all that was passing! And then Sancgraal drew down the secret portcullis, and, with undeviating regularity and patience, secured every one of the fastenings in succes-

sion. He then arose, shook the dust from his robe and cowl, and quitted the chapel, locking the doors after him. Suddenly his hair bristled upright!—and his name, shrieked in tones that would have dismayed a fiend, came to his ears! —He rushed down the steps and fled to the end of the ambulatory, pausing to gasp for breath at the extremity, and to listen again!

"Fool, fool!" he muttered to himself; "of what art thou afraid? She is asleep, and she will wake no more!—know trouble, danger, fear, remorse no more!—How know I that?— what if our monkish stories be all true, and I have consigned her to the eternal depths?— But, no! no!—all is well!—She is for ever nothing now—or in a few brief instants must be!—Ha, how, RESURGAM!" His eye was caught, as he thus half-deliriously soliloquized, by an inscription on a very ancient tomb immediately before his gaze. "Resurgam!—But three centuries and a half have elapsed since thou didst so promise!—And thou seemest to have made no heave at it yet! What is the matter?—Doth it lighten in the church?— Hark! doth one call again?"

"My reverend lord, no!—I did but humbly request your attention to my message!" replied the voice of Almoner Quodvultdeus, whom the prior, with a fearful start, now suddenly ob-

served standing before him. "I am come to inform you that our brotherhood are all met in the Chapter-house, and that Master Cromwel has brought us some mandate from his grace which it behoves us to give an instant reply unto!"

"What of that?—You look troubled, brother," said Sancgraal, rallying with a potent effort. "Master Cromwel can bring us no worse news than we have already—for I have been compelled to place the Sanctuary under interdict!—And all men shall know of the cause thereof, for the church shall be closed to all men until we have obtained our right! Assist me to double bar all the doors!"—"Nay, sir, what you see is but a qualm, which will soon pass. Lend me your arm an instant; though you carry the purse, Master Almoner, I wot well you are not like him of old!—And I do, very utterly, trust in you!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE INTERDICT OF WESTMINSTER.

Secretary Cromwel brought a letter, written all in Wolsey's own hand—in a singularly tremulous one—but peremptorily demanding the immediate release, and consignment into the hands of that official, of the person of Raphael Roodspere, whom his grace was informed the monks had taken upon them to imprison in the Gatehouse. The assembled brethren were all in the greatest consternation, expecting the arrival of their chief, the prior, in the Chapter-house. Cromwel himself was much and visibly agitated. In fact, when Prior Sancgraal entered, and took the abbot's place, he was almost the only perfectly calm and fully collected person in the audience. A man of stone, governed by some internal machinery, rather than one of flesh and nerves acting under the changeable sway of ideas—had any one there been aware of his dreadful secrets—he might well have seemed!

He replied to Cromwel's missive with austere composure, admitting the facts of his information regarding the imprisonment of Master

Roodspere—adding, with a glance before which even Cromwel recoiled, that it was by the king's express and personal command! But he had just ascertained, he said—and the black tranquillity of his tones never for an instant wavered—that a servant of the Abbey, employed to convey his rations of food to him, corrupted either by present gold, or such promises as the favourite of so mighty a patron might well be credited in making—taking advantage of the drunken jailer's absence from his proper post—had released the captive, and fled with him! There was a dead silence throughout the assemblage during the delivery of this reply, the monks keeping their cowled heads sunk on their bosoms, without daring even to glance in one another's eyes. But that it was no solitary thought to which Cromwel gave utterance, an universal start confessed, when, after a considerable pause, he observed, with a significance more marked in his manner than even in his words, "I trust that, inasmuch as they say there are not two leaves in all nature exactly alike, ye have not torn a counterpart out of the bloody book of Hunne—and privily disposed of your prisoner!"

"Master Cromwel," replied the prior, sedately, "we are not now to learn for the first time the extremity of your malice against us;

but, in this instance, not the dead but the living man, remains to attest our innocence! Your worthy Christian doctor and visitor has taken refuge in the Sanctuary, and thither the miserable novice whom he has debauched, body and soul, hath followed him to share perdition! Yea, the poison of his pernicious heresies, spreading, like a plague, the swiftest among diseased carcases, the Sanctuary men have taken his part—in such wise that I have placed them, and the entire church of Westminster, under interdict, until they surrender these infamous offenders to justice!—If you at all doubt my word, pass into the Sanctuary, and with your eyes believe!—Execute your lord's commission in person, if you can; but I something doubt whether, with his fair paramour in his company, master visitor will care to place himself even in so gracious a master's hands!"

Cromwel listened with visibly increasing astonishment at every word; but he replied by eagerly accepting the permission granted, and he left the Chapter-house, with marks of very unusual and undiplomatic agitation in his whole gait and demeanour, for the Sanctuary. All eyes were then turned in breathless expectation on the prior; and, after a brief meditation, he replied to the mute appeal in

an harangue that echoed long after in the memory of all who heard, and was, indeed, such a specimen of vehement persuasion and eloquence as that wherewith St. Anthony of old won to his will the cold wallowers of the deep,—put understanding and enthusiasm in the dull flat-fish and lymphatic seal! Sancgraal recited at length the whole course of what he designated the cardinal-legate's persecution of the monastic orders in general, and of their own abbey in particular—the unheard-of insults, defamations, and injuries so long heaped upon them—crowned by the violent usurpation of the legative visitor, Raphael Roodspere. He described the endless provocations, calumnies, oppressions, insolence of this personage; which all, he said, yet faded into nothing, in comparison with the disorders and dismal consequences entailed by his unbounded licentiousness of demeanour, and heretical principles. The scandalous spectacle of the corruptions in discipline he had introduced into the monastery—his relaxations of all rule—his favouritism of the most depraved and dissolute members only, among whom was chiefly to be remarked the Italian, whom it was his own grievous misfortune, he confessed — though with a worthy motive—to have introduced in the Abbey: monstrous malefactions as all

these were, still their usurping visitor had crowned them with offences surpassing all! He had scattered broadcast the seeds of every imaginable heresy; he had committed nigh the highest possible treason against the king's own royal prerogative, in connivance with his audacious patron; and, in climax, he had added the surpassing injury and indignity of debauching a betrothed bride of heaven of their order and convent of Clerkenwell!—had taken refuge with her under the very shadow of St. Edward's Shrine!—and there openly defied their authority, and that of the entire church, with the aid of a tumultuous rabble of malefactors and criminals of the vilest castes! It was time, therefore—the monastic Demosthenes concluded, with the look and manner, and tones of the Infernal Jove assuming the thunder—to enter into open resistance and battle with these gigantic forms of heresy and innovation. Heaven itself; the king, the queen—many most potent lords—the entire body of the monasteries, and a powerful, though dismayed, portion of the secular clergy were with them—all equally offended and averse to the proceedings of the intrusive authority the cardinal had established over them in his court. The discovery of the latter's intrigue against the royal will, regard-

ing the disposal of the heir of the great house of Northumberland in marriage, had extremely disgusted the king himself; and he had evinced his displeasure in the most marked manner, by personally consigning the conspiring visitor to prison, and ordering his condign judgment. They had only, therefore, to proceed with courage and unanimity in the path already entered upon, under his, Prior Sancgraal's, guidance, and resolutely to aid him in the effort he had resolved upon making, to rid them for ever of the cardinal's usurpation, and the scandalous presence of his representative. Henry had solemnly assured him of his royal protection in the contest; and if they lent him their unflinching support in the interdict he had pronounced, he doubted not speedily to quell the ungrateful rebellion of their vassalage, and restore the former good estate of the Abbey of Westminster, with renewed lustre, and enlarged securities and privileges! This tempestuous wind he had let loose, he added—with a rapid glance that yet signalized almost every one present who could be suspected as a partizan of the visitor's—would winnow the corn clear, not only of the chaff, but of the insidious tare-seed that lurked in it, and might else again be sown with the harvest-wheat!

This harangue, seconded by so many arguments and inviting assurances of the feasibility of the measures recommended, produced all the effect Sancgraal desired. The few proselytes and advocates of Roodspere in the monastery were silenced and panic-stricken, and, without the necessity of any formal affirmation, the prior's doings received the general assent and approbation. To some of the monks, perhaps, the excitement and variety of so unusual, of late, an exercise of spiritual power as that implied in an interdict, were in themselves considerable attractions; and the younger and idler members of the fraternity were not sorry to hear that they were furnished thereby with a befitting excuse from the routine of their monotonous devotions. The church, Sancgraal reiterated frequently, should on no pretext reopen its gates, even to themselves, until the Sanctuary submitted, and the detestable effluvium of that heretic presence ceased to corrupt the universal air of Westminster! This latter resolution had just been carried in a vehement murmur of approval, when Cromwel made his reappearance in the Chapter-house. He looked flushed and excited in an extraordinary degree. "It is true, my lord prior!" he said. "I have seen your late prisoner, who, it seems, is under protection of the immu-

nities of your Sanctuary, and of your wounded but very warlike and resolved brother, the Lord Bigod! And true it is that he denieth to obey my summons, and come forth of the Sanctuary, unless on conditions, which are private between himself and his grace the cardinal. But, meanwhile, he declares most positively that your servitor, by whose unwilling means he escaped—the præcentor, Dan Gloria!—remains a prisoner in the tower of the Gatehouse, and is in possession of information which will prove more useful and enlightening to my lord, in a certain grievous and confused matter of late, occurring, than any himself can yield! And therefore I demand of you, in the cardinal's name, the person of this young *man*!—(he laid a particular but unintentional stress on the word). And also I require to know by what right or authority ye take upon ye, as it were, the supreme function of the church, in placing your jurisdiction under ban and curse?"

"I will answer your last first, and your first last, master secretary!" replied Sancgraal, in his unshaken tones. "The abbots of Westminster owe subordination only to the supreme see, and exercise all episcopal rights within their proper bounds. We yielded to a manifest usurpation, which yet will bring upon all its

authors and advisers the exhaustion of the curse of St. Edward, when we received your visitor among us. We resume all our powers, and cast off your ungrounded tyranny, in the excommunication we have launched on the Lutheran Roodspere and his adherents!—For what you say concerning the treacherous Italian—like all his race, willing ever to betray old service and take new—I have but the report of the drunken jailer and of his wife—that the prisons are empty! If you doubt, again I say, go and believe with your own eyes!—Here are the keys of all the chambers of the Gatehouse!" And he cast the bunch, with a dismal clash, to the feet of the secretary.

"Nay," replied Cromwel, kicking them as disdainfully away, "Nay, my lord prior! if you are willing I should search your dungeons, it is a plain sign there is nothing to be found in them worthy of note! But let me search the monastery even in such unlikely spots as Islip's oratory and your own holy hermitage;—and I can make my report, perchance, more to the purpose."

"I have placed the church of Westminster under interdict—no living soul shall enter it till ye remove the heretic pollution from among us, which ye also have introduced!" replied Sancgraal.

"It shall be seen!" said Cromwel, yet with evident flagging and gloom. "Meanwhile, lord prior, you would do well to think that when a chapman closes his shop, another of the trade is not likely to gain fewer customage therefore!—And Master Roodspere hath some pretty texts to preach on, if he would run down other dealers' wares!—It is an old proverb, Better marry than do worse!—Mayhap it may even prove itself not altogether musty and gone-by in this affair!"

"Your cardinal's leman and your own purposed spoil—a dedicated novice of our Lady!—will then furnish all Christendom with the proof, Master Cromwel!—So be it!" replied Prior Sancgraal, with gloomy irony.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CHAPEL OF ST. BLAISE.

The interdict of Westminster lasted the entire space of six weeks, and continued during the whole period to fix the most eager attention of all orders and conditions of men. It divided the interest of the people even with the now openly announced proceedings on the legitimacy of the marriage of the king and queen; and of the court, with the disgrace and exile of Anne Boleyn. The Sanctuary men continued as firmly fixed in their contumacy, as the monks in their resolve to enforce submission—by the spiritual arm. That of the flesh, it was soon found, failed them; for when Prior Sancgraal, exasperated to frenzy, after a brief experiment of the effects of his interdict, ordered the vassalage of the Abbey to enter the Sanctuary, and seize upon the culprits by force of arms—they were received in a manner which satisfied even the obstinacy of their leader, Sacristan Wenlock, that only an army of much more potency and warlike discipline could hope to accomplish the enterprise. The Lord Bigod headed the resisting

Sanctuarists, and displayed the qualities of a first-rate captain, in the command of a besieged town. He barricaded the streets, and the Gatehouse entrance, while he opened convenient and well guarded breaches in the walls towards London and the open fields, for the supply and passage of the garrison; established a regular system of communication and discipline; and after repulsing the attack of the Abbey men, with an infinite artillery of stones, and a charge with staves, pokers, and pitchforks, he became, to all intents and purposes, the chieftain and leader of a successful insurrection!

Divisions in the Abbey councils themselves somewhat distracted operations on that side. Treasurer Gislebert utterly refused to lend sanction to any appeal to the king's power, in the contest with their vassalage—which Sancgraal persuaded himself and others he could readily obtain. But when, in spite of all opposition, the prior made application for assistance to Henry, in effecting the capture of the heretic refugees, he found that Wolsey's influence was not so utterly destroyed as he imagined. Wolsey himself, still supreme in the royal council, rejected the solicitation with the utmost disdain, and an ominous allusion to the disasters that had accompanied his former

interference with the rights of the church and its Sanctuary, in the case of Hunne. And thus the monks were left entirely to the weapons of their spiritual armoury—which they soon perceived, with extreme astonishment and alarm, had, in some prodigious manner, lost their whole terror and efficacy! In vain were the most successful spells of the ancient superstitions evoked!—the curse and excommunication pronounced by Sancgraal, daily renewed on the Place of the Ordeal—all religious rites denied!—in fact, all intercourse of whatsoever kind with their spiritual lords was cut off by the Sanctuary men themselves with their barricades. In vain were the bells of the Abbey kept tolling, as at a perpetual funeral, and the church itself remained hermetically closed. Only the prior was allowed to enter it, and he only paid the interior a solitary visit once a day, at high noon, to ascertain that all was well. On these occasions he suffered no one to accompany him; according to Almoner Benson, he even, and with a display of extraordinary violence, prevented a fleshfly, that happened to come humming after him, from entering the church! Indeed, the Almoner began obscurely to hint, in safe quarters, that the prior's understanding was disordered, and that he was infallibly going, if

not fairly gone, mad. His whole manner and demeanour, he observed compassionately, was wonderfully changed; it was wild, irascible---at times, ferocious; his speech was full of bitter insults and contumely to all whom he addressed; from a model of sobriety, he had become as profound a drainer of the goblet as Gildas himself, but without the good wine ever producing the slightest hilarious effect upon him. He spent hours in his cell, pacing it without ceasing, and muttering to himself; ---he disappeared sometimes from the Abbey for hours, and was at chance times seen wandering in remote woods, and the most solitary wilds of Hampstead and Hendon, rarely calling at the luxurious country seats which the monks of Westminster inherited there under the designation of farmsteads.

But, meanwhile, he did not commit the common error of madmen, and disproportion his means to his end. He exhausted every artifice of superstition to sway the Sanctuary men from their determination to protect the refugees, and turned all the physical resources at his disposal, with relentless perseverance, against them. He openly announced that the protection of the church was withdrawn from the Sanctuary, and invited the officers of the various surrounding justiciaries, so long set at

nought, to execute their writs by force. But even the citizens of London, not unmindful of their old quarrel on behalf of Hunne, declined to avail themselves of the privilege accorded. The prior placed under the same ban all who should bring succour or provisions to the recusants; and yet the lucrative markets of the City of Refuge continued to be abundantly supplied. Even the agricultural dependents of the Abbey were suspected of not deserting their best customers in this emergency! The Abbey doles and benefactions to the poor of the Sanctuary entirely ceased---while on the part of its denizens, all rent and toll and tallage ceased, the Lord Bigod constituting himself civil as well as military administrator of his usurped dominion.

To what cause was this wonderful insensibility of a populace, whose ignorance and crimes ought to have rendered it the most submissive to authority, so enforced, to be ascribed? Secret espionage reported that the fugitive priests, Roodspere and Bilney, had devoted themselves, with a wonderful industry and fervour, to supply the loss of the spiritual purveyance of the numerous ecclesiastics of Westminster Abbey—and seemed to suffice for the task. Wherever they presented themselves they were followed by enthusiastic

crowds, who received their tidings with the thirsty satisfaction of the fields when the rain falls after a long drought. St. Julian-of-the-Pilgrims became the church of this marvellous schism---destitute of all the established machinery of devotion, but filled with an emanation of the divine glories of the truth and purity of religion which in a manner transfigured the persons of its enthusiastic apostles, and clothed even the slight and shrunken figure of Bilney with the characteristics of a prophet and lawgiver! It was soon evident that it was no longer merely the violent movement of a populace in defence of its rights, or in rebellious defiance of its superiors; and it was no wonder that many of the monks, who abetted their vengeful prior at the commencement, began to dread the results of his obstinate persistance. But no one ventured even to hint the general opinion to him. Gislebert himself retired, rebuked and awestricken, from an attempt he made to induce the prior to listen to some terms of accommodation. Sancgraal, with concise bitterness, professed himself to be better informed than any of the brethren, of the true condition of things. Those strong stimulants of a new religious excitement, would soon cease to produce their effect upon the populace, he said!—they would

feel the need of the church's balsams, and return to their allegiance. Then, in tones that made even the bigoted treasurer shudder, he added, he was well informed that in spite of all the licentious love and arguments of the Lutheran heresiarch, the miserable victim of his lust pined and moped incessantly, and was the prey of all the remorse and terror to which guilt so enormous necessarily consigned her. He knew, from sure authority, that Wolsey himself, wicked as he was and reckless of all means to attain his ends, yet refused to yield the main bulwarks of the church, and submit to the terms demanded by Roodspere as the price of his recognition of the cardinal's innocence in Percy's affair. And besides his feelings as an ecclesiastic on this subject, doubtless revenge and anger at the failure of his own flagitious passion must retain a potent influence! The king, the queen, the Duke of Norfolk, the entire monastic body, adhered to their cause—and he would never surrender it while he was chief in the abbey, or possessed any influence in its resolves!—And thus matters continued during the considerable lapse of time we have mentioned, when rumours began to gain ground that some species of compromise was in course of negotiation, between the abbey, the legate, and

the revolted vassalage of Westminster. Gardiner made his frequent appearance in the abbey, and was closeted in long conferences with the prior, while his rival secretary made an equally constant visitation in the Sanctuary, Finally—and somewhat suddenly—Sancgraal himself announced to his well-pleased monks, that on condition of the removal of the heretic refugees from Westminster, he had arranged with the legate to withdraw the interdict, and reopen the church, without requiring to be allowed to prosecute the charges against the visitor, if he consented to withdraw for ever from their precincts. These conditions, the cardinal was coming in person to enforce; and they were hastened the speedier to a conclusion by the desire the king expressed of celebrating a court marriage, which was immediately to take place, within the abbey. The Lord Percy and the Lady Mary Talbot were to be united by Wolsey himself, in the royal presence, without further delay All preliminaries were arranged; and to give it the greater solemnity and magnificence, as was alleged—or for some additional luxury of vengeance in the act—Henry was resolved the marriage should be effected in the Abbey Church!

Early on the morning following this an-

nouncement, the gates of the long desolate building were thrown open, and a great cohort of lay-brothers were observed at work with besoms in it, and in making various festal preparations. The report soon spread, and a most extraordinary number of persons flocked from all parts to witness the restoration of the sacred enclosure to its customary uses. At a later hour, the obstructions which had long kept the Gatehouse entrance to the Sanctuary impervious, were removed from within, and Master Secretary Cromwel was seen to cross thither, arriving direct from York Place. He was received at the entrance by the Lord Bigod, surrounded by a staff of the chief desperadoes of the City of Refuge, who welcomed Cromwel with apparent cordiality. By these personages he was conducted to St. Julian-of-the-Pilgrims, the headquarters of the chiefs of the resistance, religious and physical; but Lord Bigod only undertook the office of conducting the emissary to the deserted wing of the hostel in which Roodspere and his young wife and Bilney resided, with jailer Mugwort, and two zealous female disciples, who served as their attendants, rather for love than hire. Long Meg's foray after her husband resulted in a remarkable failure, for the Sanctuary men, disgusted with her virago insolence and

violence of old, rescued her spouse from her talons, and sent her home to keep house with the idiot servitor, in a manner that certain overlooked the claims of the sex to which she ostensibly belonged, on personal forbearance.

The secretary and his noble convoy found Roodspere, his youthful bride, Bilney, and several persons, who, from their garbs, were probably citizens of London, seated in a chamber, which the reverential kindness of the latter had furnished with some degree of comfort and convenience. It may be remarked, that among these was the husband of Hunne's daughter, Hagar—a very wealthy and influential merchant, but whose commerce was now severely crippled by the cardinal's Spanish war. Roodspere was reading to this attentive group a translation he made as he proceeded, of a letter that had just come to hand from Melancthon to himself, congratulating the new apostle on the reports of his rise and progress, which it appeared had already passed into Germany. Bilney, with a calmly elate countenance, listened to every word affectionately, as if they came from some long cherished and beloved friend. And beside him, like a favourite daughter near her sire, sate Lily-Virgin—one of her hands clasped in the venerable Reformer's—but looking far other-

wise than one would have expected, notwithstanding the stormy circumstances of the honeymoon, to have found a bride who had but just beheld its wane. She now wore a secular dress, and her countenance was revealed—exquisitely and spiritually beautiful as ever; but she was pale as her own flower in the moonlight; and though her gaze was fixed in an ecstasy of love and admiration on her young husband, and she seemed to drink in his every utterance as if it had been of a divine music, her attitude was drooping and faint—almost powerless—and a deep shadow of despondency, as of some unseen presence of evil, dwelt on her beauty like the twilight of the Valley of Death projecting far into the sunny regions of the earth! And it was strange that the moment she perceived Cromwel a glow of colour mounted to her temples, and she sprang with an eager and joyful exclamation, which yet had in it something of the sharpness and anguish of a suppressed shriek. It was this latter version that struck the acute observation of the secretary chiefly. "All is well, lady fair!" he said, with strained cheerfulness, "if only Master Roodspere plays his part manfully and faithfully! My lord thinks only of how to reinstate him as well as himself in the king's favour—and assents to

all the terms proposed. Here is a safe conduct, signed also by the king's highness's own hand—and you may look within a brief while to receive him back to your arms, with full release and benediction on your matrimony, under all the legatine forms!"

"And then, dearest wife! these foolish phantoms will cease for aye to haunt thee—for phantoms are they only, raised by a black magician, whose fumigations darken God's pure sunshine around us both! Master Secretary, I am ready—my father, Bilney, will read the rest of this precious and consoling epistle to ye, brethren," said Roodspere, ceasing from his task, "and unto ye all, but specially to you, father indeed, since you are my soul's foster-sire! and to you, generous knight and noble, I commend, meanwhile, the protection and consolation of this my sole earthly treasure and care! Do ye plight me your words to this or ere I depart?"

"Yea, by St. Botolph of Bigod! for my part in the answer!" replied the triumphant leader of the revolt of the Sanctuary. "But forget not, according to promise, thou valiant clerk, to urge on the cardinal my new claims to his consideration!—I say not that thou shouldst ask for Calais again—and it is early times yet, I fear, to be bidden take our own

rewards out of the abbey heapings yonder. But if he needs any desperate service in his new wars, here am I, Bigod of Chepstow, as fit a man as another to take it in hand! As for the misshapen, hugging bear, who calls himself my brother, tell the cardinal I renounce him as such—and the rather that he hath sent me word of late, if I cease not from my opposition to his will, he will leave his cowl, and reclaim his birthright and estates, as one ousted of the same by unlawful threats and cozenings! It were as good to wrangle as for a kernelled nut, but we may see thereby he also espies the old house is tottering in all its beams!"

"Doubt not—I were most ungrateful else! and I trust I shall carve the prior work enough to answer his own imputings!—The unhappy woman, your father's wife, Master Luttrel, hath so totally disappeared, and under such false allegings, that it is no lack of Christian charity to believe she hath been in some unlawful, perhaps, murtherous, wise, disposed of!" said Roodspere—adding with an appearance of hesitation, "Yet so deeming, how can I leave thee—though but for the brief passage to York Place—within the reach of that black grasp, my Lily bride!"

"Not so far, Master Roodspere; you need

never be fairly out of sight: the cardinal is coming to the abbey!" said Cromwel. This seemed to surprise Roodspere, who, it appeared, had heard nothing of the intended matrimonial celebration; but it gave him much satisfaction. And at the same time Lily-Virgin cast herself into his arms, and with the most moving tears and entreaties, implored of him to hasten and obtain the promised release from their falsely-imposed vows, and the turbulence and horrors of the Sanctuary. "In sooth, sweet pearl, it is but a vile setting for thee, this shellscurf of the papal leprosy!" said Roodspere, with a deep sigh; and, comforted by the earnest promises of his friends and adherents, he finally took a tender farewell of his bride, and followed Cromwel to the abbey church. It was only when they reached the exterior of the Gate-house, and perceived the great and brilliant concourse there assembled, that Cromwel explained to him the exact state of circumstances, and the intended marriage of Percy and the Lady Mary Talbot. This was the only means the cardinal found effectual to appease the king's fury; and, with the testimony in his favour Roodspere was to afford, he did not now doubt to regain all his old supremacy over him, which would

enable him to extend his protection to Roodspere himself, and his adherents. By what cruel means this sorrowful matrimony was brought about—by what persuasions, menaces, and inhuman exertion of parental authority—Cromwel did not even affect to deny, and the first spectacle that presented itself to Roodspere on arrival sufficiently attested.

The Cardinal was in the now extinct chapel, or compartment, in the extremity of the south cross, of St. Blaize, formerly used as a revestiary, or chamber in which the priests who were to officiate at the principal masses arrayed themselves in their robes. Roodspere was escorted thither, noticing as he went a great assemblage of the relatives and friends of the two noble houses about to form an alliance, but not a single member of the community of Westminster. The latter circumstance gave him some satisfaction; and he could have derived little from observation of the bridal groups. Gloom and sadness sate on every visage; and when Roodspere followed Cromwel into the chapel of St. Blaize, the appearance of the bridegroom, of his father, the Earl of Northumberland, and even of the relentless politician, Gardiner, whom they found closeted there with the cardinal, was equally unpromising. Wolsey was seated,

arrayed over his scarlet, in a stole whose lustrous gems and embroidery might have shamed the most gorgeous ephods of the high priests of Solomon; while at his feet, in an abject attitude of submission, knelt the Lord Percy, garbed in white velvet as a bridegroom, but with whiter cheeks—tears streaming from his eyes, listening to an exhortation doubtless intended to steel him for the painful ordeal he had to pass through. The Earl of Northumberland, an aged, stooping personage, resembling some bronzed figure of ancient chivalry, but with a countenance whose avaricious, careworn wrinkles were rather those of a miser and scrivener than of the descendant of the warlike Hotspur, leaned with tremulous anxiety over the back of Wolsey's chair. The cardinal himself looked agitated, and it was clear that Roodspere's arrival added to his emotion. Nevertheless, he appealed to him as to one whose presence he had summoned for the purpose. "This is he of whom I speak, who will witness how passionately the king is taken with this painted fly, that had so nigh gudgeoned thee!" he said. "And what a madness were it in thee to compete with so royal and mighty a king, to whom kings themselves do yield the *pas* with humility,

thy father hath already most earnestly shown unto thee! Ay, and it were flat treason in thee to have hoped to 'scape the king's rage, for how else could it be but by armed aid of your vassalage and alliance? Perchance even of Scotland, as was done of old in the time of the great Percy forfeiture! Men have gone to the block on treasons much less dangerously proven, in the way of inference!—Remember how great Buckingham poured his royal blood on the scaffold! Thou shouldst have lived all thy life a disinherited man, and young Josceline—whom thy sire hath no cause to love less than thyself, seeing that he hath never given him any pain or turmoil of thought—should have held your place in England, even as the black prior's brother here did oust him of his true succession, and only through a stepmother's hate! And hadst thou carried it all by thy foolish will—Passion of Christ!—what blessing couldst thou have expected on thy broken pledge to Mary Talbot?—Only God's vengeance, and the Church's, on men forsworn!—Which were likeliest to come to thee in the way of a most infinite dishonour! For know ye not what a name this managed jennet of thine hath in France? Seeing of what light material she is made, that any wind can blow hither and thither, canst thou

doubt what the end would have been when a king so much royaller and imperious of his will than Francis, that first won her, should have renewed his offers to thy wife? Hotspur would have had perchance a royal grandson, but not such full surely as he projected himself when he set the crown of England on the point of his sword at Shrewsbury!"

"I know the king loved her—but she loved me!—She would have been true to me through tortures and death—and I am false to her!" groaned the bridegroom. "I am pledged to her—pledged by my soul and all the holy witnesses of faith!—My very heartstrings are twined with hers!"

"Thou art pledged to her by thine own folly, and her craft, whereof I know not which be the greater!" returned the cardinal. "Thou sawest the birdlime, foolish mavis, and deemed it but a brighter sunshine on the branches!—Tell me, mad steer, which is likeliest to know what is best for thee, and to compass it—thine own ungoverned appetites, or the sober discretion of thy father and of me, that am thy lord and superior alike temporally and spiritually?—Go to! Let not thy proud cate know a Percy wept to lose a mismatch with a simpering mercer's daughter, once removed!—And what avails the drop of Howard blood in such

a sea of rabble slush?—But in any case, hast thou courage to face a herd of roaring lions? —For, by my fay, the king's passions, being roused, are more deadly and masterful!"

"Never think it, son!—never think it that for my whole life I have been as it were a patient labourer, to raise up our house to its old grandeur and inheritance—to let all be cast away again on a rash boy's escheat!" said the Earl of Northumberland. "Either thou dost now as thou art bidden—or I will do as I am bidden, and make Josceline my heir!"

"And know ye not how many scriptural points go to teaching us the due obedience to our princes?" continued the cardinal. "But how terrible—how insupportable to any subject it were to endure his sovereign's wrath—even stone walls may teach us! Hadst thou seen how he raged at ourself even!—but lo ye, this is a beloved and most beauteous spouse and queen! And see ye, she swoons almost to the embrace of death, facing her king's forbidding, in the limning here!"

The cardinal pointed as he spoke, with a quivering hand, to the ancient fresco painting that concealed the bare walls of the Chapel of St. Blaize; and every eye followed the gesture. It was the work of a monk of Westminster, a man of singular though untaught and

grotesque genius in his art, whose very name was forgotten—whose works were destined to be obliterated, with the exception of a few faint traces, before an appreciating age could arise. The huge painting represented, in a maze of superb colouring and gilding, with little or no attention to perspective and scholastic anatomy, but with infinite force and meaning, the moment when Esther appeared before Ahasuerus, to implore the redemption of the chosen people from the merciless fury of their purposing destroyer, Haman. Percy turned with a shudder from the deathly pallor in the countenance of the swooning queen, while on the contrary, Roodspere fixed an earnest and indeed fascinated and absorbed gaze on the whole group.

"Go, then, with your noble sire, and show yourself like an eager and expectant bridegroom, in readiness to receive his highness and the Shrewsbury accompaniment!" said Wolsey. "There have been reports which you will have something ado to make the Lady Mary forget —so look the cheerfuller on it! My Lord Northumberland, keep with your son, and tell him stories of all the good weddings that you remember in your time, which must, for the chief part, have in the like manner been made!"

The earl took the hint, and, somewhat roughly grasping his son by the arm, drew him out of the chapel, amidst the group of weddingers in the transept. Wolsey then turned to Roodspere. "What stare ye at so wonderously, master doctor?" he observed, in mild but yet tremulous and agitated tones. "And so we meet again!—but that I have cause to dread thine horoscope, rail at superstitions howsoever we hear thou dost, thyself canst scarcely say otherwise! Thy rashness, and mine enemies' urgings, have placed me before the king in the light of a traitorous conspirer against his pleasure—one that hath crossed him on a point wherein his will is so strangely set that it floweth like the wind of which Indian seamen discourse, without ceasing, all one way!—By the same act am I made to appear the unkind betrayer of the interests of my own two most faithful friends and adherents, to serve a blood I hold in peculiar distrust and mislike!—Nevertheless, I will keep my troth, if you come prepared to clear me, by a true confession, of this mortal invention, and set me right again in my king's judging breast?"

"I am here, sir, to witness to all the truth in that matter—conditioning that your grace solemnly contracts to appease the scruples of my most dear wife, by releasing me from my

detested yoke, and authorising our renewed solemnities with your own lips!" replied Roodspere, steadily.

"O, all the saints!—Knit anew the false knot the heresiarch Bilney has tied!" exclaimed Wolsey, passionately; but a moment's reflection seemed to suggest a milder course to him. "Call her not wife again before us until then!—it hurts our very sense like the wriggling of an eariwig!—But truly you are no longer worthy to be of our church, and (our Lady pardon me!) I will permit you to retire to your own at Antwerp, as speedily as possible, right joyfully removing the scandal and danger of your presence here. But the king's wrath—which is but couchant not stilled—can only be removed by your aiding, as far as in you lies, to repair the damage you have done—and in bringing back Mistress Boleyn to the court!—At present, she refuses to receive any letter, message, or entreaty—disdains alike summons and command—will not even see the king in person come to beg for mitigation! But mayhap, being her accomplice, she will listen more reasonably to you—and the rather, when by the issue of this day's business, her hopes elsewhere being effectually rebuked, she discerns her stout-heartedness is of no avail, she will lend a meeker ear to the glorious

proposals the king will offer on her acceptance!"

During this speech, Roodspere's pale countenance had gradually glowed into an expression of indignation and rejection, whose utterance Cromwel hastened with masterly dexterity to prevent. "Master Roodspere cannot hesitate—his fair wife will else, too certainly, go mad under the oppression of her open-eye dreams!" he exclaimed.

"Dare not, again I say, to call her *wife*—a priest's wife—in my presence, and without my licence, which on no other terms shall be obtained!" said Wolsey, with angry vehemence.

"Will you hear, then, the tale of a monk's *paramour*, my lord cardinal?—Truly, she was a wife too!—the wife of Marchant Hunne!—for such was the chorister, Dan Gloria!—who, also, has disappeared in a manner which leaves me scarcely the shadow of a doubt, or of a hope, but that she is barbarously destroyed by him!" replied Roodspere, with more than equal warmth.

"Dare not again to broach this hideous calumny—the invention of hatred and malignity—or would you, indeed, destroy the church utterly?" exclaimed Wolsey. "However it be, I command thee, and all, to keep silent on the matter—though I believe in no-

thing of it—or in little!—The monks have sent this foreign singing-bird back to his own woodlands—that is all!—And I have made peace with them, for I find that he who strives to mend an old house with new timbers is likeliest to bring it altogether down about his ears!—In brief, make your election: either to do as I have said, on command—when whatsoever recompense and pardon, for yourself and your adherents, you may demand, I will freely give; or, I must plainly avouch, I can no longer afford you any protection!—And I will utterly disavow you in any kinship—which, methinks, will affright Sir Amias Paulet's simple daughter more than my little-meaning kisses of yore in the oratory!—And I will, for I must, give you up to the fury of the monks, and of the king, who is importuned incessantly to lend a hand in rooting you out of your unwholesome burrow!—All else is going well with me! Campeius is at Calais, ready to embark as soon as this sickness in his train abates—which is no politic invention, but a true malady—wherein men break into an effusing sweat, and, losing all humidity of blood, the stream is choked, as it were, with its own fatness—becomes as a dull treacle in the veins, and a blue coldness and death ensue!—Heaven for-

bid he should bring us such a present from the east, wise magus though he be!—Else, we need but his presence to complete all we would have done! The king is daily, yea, hourly, more and more disgusted with this new fantastical demeanour of the queen—her courting of the lewd people—her gibbering semblances of an unfelt gaiety!—And the divorce once accomplished, my way lies as smoothly to Rome as an it were all the way thither over a satin unroll! And then shall I be no longer the servant of a king—but kings shall be my servants; no longer dependent on the gusty breath, which is as like at any moment to puff us out as to blow us into a more glorious blaze—but the very wind of the world shall blow as we list!—And, hark, he comes!—Make up your mind, master scholar, while we are at the altar, for then—"

But at this moment the door of the chapel opened, and the Duke of Norfolk appeared, who, addressing the cardinal in a much less deferential tone than he wontedly used to him, announced the king's arrival. Wolsey noticed this with a bitter comment. "Ay, we may tell how the wind blows by the bend of the grass!" he murmured. "But still the wise weathervane turns and glitters with it, blow whither it may!"

A loud flourish of trumpets, uttering what, under the circumstances, was rather the insulting and menacing signal of a conqueror's entrance than a cheerful harbingering, seconded the duke's announcement, and quickened Wolsey's movements with a start, and a degree of agitation that could scarcely escape notice. He calmed himself, however, with a strong effort, opened the gates of the chapel, and stepped hurriedly forth, making a signal to Gardiner only to follow. Roodspere now perceived that the transept was crowded with the splendid retinue of the king, and the procession escorting the bride. The towering person of Henry himself was easily distinguished, and he led the bride in his own hand; and Roodspere felt all the anguish of Percy's position when he saw how little capable of supplying the loss of the magnificent and gorgeously-gifted beauty, whom the tyrant arrogated to himself, was the pale and drooping girl thus conducted to the sacrifice. Henry's visage was certainly the only joyful one among the bridal group; and even the bridegroom came in for a share in his good humour. He addressed a jovial congratulation to him which made all the ladies blush, and all the lords laugh. He then himself put the bride's hand in Percy's, and with eyes whose

savage sparkle Roodspere clearly discerned, exclaimed, "To work at your spells, my lord cardinal!—so fair and well conditioned a match as this it is as merry to make as to unmake one in all respects its opposite!"

Encouraged by this sidelong expression of approval of the policy to which Wolsey had now committed himself, buoyed up by those air-bladders of hope destined so soon to burst, the cardinal performed the rite with a resumption of his accustomed sonorous dignity.

To the majority of the persons assembled in the abbey to witness the spectacle, there was little in it of an unusual character; but the entire disappearance of the monks, and the presence of the king and cardinal. To Roodspere, it was a desecration of the holiest rights of nature and of the human heart, effected by the tyranny and cruelty of two powerful and merciless men. He turned from it as from a deed of wickedness and shame; and again his eye was caught and retained by the figures in the monkish painting on the wall. As we have said, it was a rude and crowded design, yet full of strenuous meaning and expression. The artist had taken the moment when Esther, kneeling before the mighty despot who "reigned from India even unto Ethiopia," obtained the redemption of

the chosen people from their oppressor. Was it by chance, or by some providential or imaginative identification, that the majestic figure of the Persian king greatly resembled that of Henry VIII., not only in gorgeous garniture, but in personal characteristics? The beauty which the painter had bestowed, to his best ability, on the suppliant and distressed Esther—the personage of a dark and aged Vashti lowering in the distance—the blustering Haman whispering in the monarch's ear—the ragged Mordecai listening with the most intense anxiety at the gate of the court—completed a series of similes, whose conjunction struck upon Roodspere's excited imagination with the force of a direct revelation of the divine will! The thought broke like the glow of wine upon his brain, that even thus as of old the Daughter of the Captivity redeemed her people from the destruction devised against them by the oppressive chief minister, Haman, through the love of her sovereign—so might the high-spirited and injured Anne Boleyn, already a convert of the Reformation, effect that of which no other human agency seemed capable—overthrow the power of the tyrannous cardinal, and introduce the reign of a pure religion and morality—by the same means!—The Vashti of this modernized scripture was already con-

temned and discarded like her of the ancient one! The Mordecai!—might he not be taken as the representative of the maltreated, despised, and yet mercilessly-persecuted restorers of Christianity, and find his counterpart in the person of the husband of Lily-Virgin? —While Roodspere thus gazed, the colouring seemed to take animation and to utter articulate speech—the groups to step from the canvas—and, after the lapse of three thousand years, the Divine Cause of all beneficent human action seemed to purpose the repetition of one of His most remarkable, unmanifest interferences, on behalf of those whom he had chosen as the depositaries of his will! It might have been the superstition of enthusiasm!—yet who can say how it may please the supreme director of that immense machine He has fashioned for himself in the human mind, to achieve the vast results depending on this inspiration of the love, the despair, the compassion, and the indignation, all roused in Roodspere's heart like flames in the embers of a furnace, when the blastwind rouses its most latent sparks into vehement glow!

Cromwel, who all the while of the marriage ceremonial was exhausting argument to persuade Roodspere to an implicit obedience to the cardinal's will—representing the incalcu-

lable dangers to himself, his young wife, and all his friends—the triumph of his cruel enemy, Gardiner—the destruction of his cause—that would e'se ensue—with all the energy and argument his own menaced share in the catastrophe could prompt—Cromwel also grew amazed at his absent and absorbed intensity of consideration! But when the act was completed —when all that words could do to unite two alien hearts was done, and showers of silver coin among the people, and exultant flourishes of heralds' trumpets, announced its consummation—then, when he uttered a last fervent entreaty that, if insensible to every other sentiment, Roodspere would remember the terrific doubt kept in reserve, to be infused into his nectar cup of love—Cromwel was electrified with joy by Roodspere's reply, though he spoke like a man awaking from a dream. "Be calm, be calm!—I do consent!"—Almost at the same moment, the king, abruptly leaving the new kinsfolk to their congratulations, and escorted by Wolsey and Gardiner, entered the chapel of St. Blaize.

Wolsey was undoubtedly engaged in the subject of his vindication, and in the proof he had secured in Roodspere's testimony, for as they entered Henry interrupted him, with burly good humour and gaiety. "Tut, man, we are

content to believe you: let it pass, let it pass! —You have redeemed your fault, whatever it was, as nobly as Balin himself, that struck the dolorous stroke in King Pellam's Castle!—Or will have, when the rest of your promise is redeemed, and this frosty star returns to sparkle in our heaven again!—Yet we will hear what this confessioner of yours hath to say, for 'tis as good to listen to as a tale of the tempest men have just escaped! Tell us all how it chanced—not as thou art schooled peradventure, thou ghostly clerk!—and we will believe as if thou camest from the dead thou seemest likelier to go among, without the need of thine enemies' shove over the brink."

The king threw himself into the chair as he spoke, with a puffing sigh of satisfaction, and casting one massive thigh over its arm, swung the leg leisurely backward and forward, fixing his still frowning eyes on Roodspere.

"Kneel and make utterance, Raphael, as an thou wert clearing thy soul in a death-bed confession!" said Wolsey, with warmth, neither pleased with the evident insinuation in the king's words, nor with his apparent indifference to the purport of his own justification. Roodspere obeyed, and perceiving plainly tha there was no further possible use in concealing the circumstances to which he was privy, he

gave a full account of his connexion with the project of the clandestine marriage. During this statement, Henry burst into frequent and stormy peals of laughter, slapping his broad thigh with exultation, yet mingling terrible and insulting expressions regarding his defeated rival and Anne Boleyn. The cardinal listened with the most intense anxiety and approval, for Roodspere's statement, in perfect consistency with the truth, entirely exonerated him from any share in the contrivance. The courageous candour with which Roodspere avowed his own, seemed to produce even a favourable effect upon Henry himself. "By my head! thou art a true vassal, whether thou speakest truth or not, thus to thrust thy breast between thy lord and his enemy's spear!—But nay, Wolsey, we do believe in thy witness's honest visage, and that the monks lied on thee as they do in all other matters they put tongue to!—perchance on this outspoken lad, too, in the matter of his heresies!—But still he is no better than he should be since he confesses his main object was to procure a safe refuge for the novice, whom they say now he hath cajoled to share his roost in the Sanctuary!—But you have but half purged yourself, cardinal, until you fulfil the rest of your promise, and bring my fled falcon back to the jesses."

"Her haught courage will vail its top-gallants, we doubt not, when she shall learn these news, which we will send her by an envoy whom she will both admit and believe," said Wolsey, with a bitter and extorted smile. "It was my purpose, if I could obtain your grace's pardon and protection thereto—to send Master Roodspere with the tidings, and your royal invitation to Mistress Anne to return."

"How sayest thou, knave priest!—Wilt thou merit, not only pardon of thy treasonable fact, but such advancement as Henry of Englond can offer, by bringing thy beauteous accomplice hitherward again?" said Henry, and he turned his fierce eyes, crimpled very small with suspicious scrutiny, on Roodspere's working visage. The most intense anxiety among all the auditors awaited the reply, and Gardiner in especial betrayed the most vivid interest in the result. It was clear that this was not of the kind either expected or desired by him, when Roodspere replied by calmly accepting the office imposed upon him, on condition that his success should entitle him to a commensurate reward. "There is nothing thou canst ask but I will grant it—save the free election in this abbey, which I have assured to another on my kingly word!" said Henry, joyfully. "Let this good lad follow

us to the palace, Wolsey, where we will give him his instructions, and certain lovetokens to our lady which shall persuade her we have well forgiven her her presumption and ingratitude!"

"The cardinal's grace alone has power to grant me what I shall require, in the way of recompense, my liege!" said Roodspere.

"Promise him all his asking, Wolsey, whatever it be!" said Henry, with vehemence. "Meanwhile we will haste to conclude this joyful wedding, and will then expect master visitor in our privy chamber."

Wolsey made an emphatic sign to Roodspere, not to make his requests before the king, and an open expression of his willingness to grant whatever in reason could be demanded of him. "In or out of reason!" was Henry's gracious observation; and ashamed to keep the bridal group any longer waiting, he rejoined them in the utmost imaginable gaiety and good humour. Roodspere remained to prefer his requests; which were few but weighty. He required that the cardinal should grant him immediately a formal absolution from his vows, and Lily from her extorted plight; and that Wolsey should acknowledge the groundlessness of the imputation on his birth, by himself solemnising the union between

them. That on his return Bilney and he should be granted a safe conduct and free passage into Germany, and that his wife's inheritance should no longer be withheld from her use. That meanwhile she was to remain, under the cardinal's plight for her safety, in the Sanctuary, and under the guard of the Lord Bigod and his adherents; who, in recompense for his valiant and generous conduct throughout the affair, should be granted the government of Calais, with leave to enlist under the king's banner, and take thither, as many of the Sanctuary men as should be willing to accept honourable service with a chieftain for whom all had so much esteem.

Wolsey demurred to some of these propositions, and plainly declared that he would comply with none of them until Roodspere had earned his wages by effecting the object in view. "You will find it no easy matter!—never was there a lady so set on her own will and way as this!—It is no policy to pay the workman before he brings home his piece!—Do your work and claim your hire!—But meanwhile, for Sir Amias's daughter, she will be safest and most honourably lodged in her nunnery!"

"Or in your grace's palace!" subjoined Gardiner. The cardinal coloured and looked

embarrassed; but Roodspere so vehemently repudiated both propositions, and insisted with such immutable resolution on his own, that Wolsey at last, in no very gracious manner, accorded him all he asked, with the reserve that the full performance should only be exacted as the reward of his success. Then urging him to lose not a moment in his preparations, as the king's impatience admitted of no delay, Roodspere returned into the Sanctuary, to announce the result, and accomplish the most heartrending and difficult of his tasks —the separation from his loved and loving bride.

Wolsey remained for some time after all the other principal personages had left the abbey. With a strange absurdity of superstition, he had taken the notion that it was necessary he should make his peace with St. Edward, and he desired to offer an oblation and prayers at the shrine. But the Chapel of the Kings was found to be securely locked, and some time elapsed before the messenger sent for the keys — Gardiner undertook the office — returned with tidings that they were with the prior in his hermitage. Thither also Gardiner volunteered to ascend to procure them; and thus Wolsey had some time to wait, pacing the sunfraught, gleaming aisles, which were now

almost entirely deserted, perusing—vain lesson to so restless and ambitious a spirit!—those pompous hieroglyphs in which Death had written the vanity of all human success. Conquest, beauty, learning, pleasure, dominion—all alike humbled in the dust beneath the never-wearied tramp of the destroyer!—the silent ages seemed keeping watch over his trophies, wherever the eye fell, and his only: all others only swelled the pomp of his march, as the stars deepen by their brightness the darkness of night! But a man who had even found a means for the display of his ostentation and rivalry of royal greatness, in the preparation and ornament of his own sepulchre, could not read this impressive page aright!—When Prior Sancgraal and Gardiner arrived they found Wolsey curiously contemplating the frettings on the canopy of Edmund Crouchback, and descanting to Cromwel—who seemed now restored to some favour—on their admirable finish and arrangement.

Wolsey received the prior with a graciousness he had never yet displayed towards him. "Our secretary and your constant pleader, Dr. Stephen, here, will bear me witness I am ready as far as man can be, to do my devoir to our Lady, and restore her stolen novice to her! But for what remains to be done, you

must make and use your opportunities, lord prior, during Master Roodspere's absence—which can only be for some few days. Otherwise, I must keep my word with him, and inflict indeed a heavy blow on the whole polity and discipline of the church! But *needs must*!—Meanwhile I would make my peace with St. Edward, and strive to obtain his forgiveness for what I may be thought to have done against his honour."

"The chapel has been closed during the entire interdict—it must now be very close and musty, sir!" replied Sancgraal, in a strangely hollow, and as it were far-off tone, from the depths of his cowl. "Howbeit, it must be entered sometime or another—and as well now as another!—I will cense before your grace, to remove, if I may, the deathly perfume that makes the air so sick!"

He snatched rather than took a censer-pot from an attendant who happened to be passing, and, liberally diffusing the cloudy fragrance around, led the way to St. Edward's Chapel. Wolsey followed. Cromwel afterwards remembered that Sancgraal stood stockstill for a moment on the top of the steps before he undid the door; while with something peculiarly wild and disordered in his manner, he pointed to the inscription on the tomb of

Edward I., which designated him "Malleus Scotorum."—"Hearken!—even thus silently, for ages, on death's anvil, hath lain this Hammer of the Scots!—Death is as speechless as his own worms!—Let us on."

The cardinal himself gazing around the dusty magnificence of the royal sepulchre, admitted that the dank odour which hung over it was far from pleasant—and hastened to complete his devotion. But as he knelt before the front block of the feretory, Cromwel drew his robe back, and observed, "Take care, sir, how you kneel!—What dark ooze is this?" He pointed to a slender stream, trickling from the middle recess of the shrine, of a brown red hue, that had meandered over the floor to some distance, in the twisting convolutions of a knot of serpents. Cromwel turned and looked full at Sancgraal; but he was already on both his knees, assiduously, nay, violently engaged in wiping up the stain, in his own resumed sackcloth robe.

"What can this be?" continued Cromwel, with strong emotion. "Can the unfortunate Italian, who has disappeared, have *committed suicide* on this spot?—since that is still the way in which troublesome people remove themselves out of Westminster!"

"His body would remain, so!—men can-

not bury themselves !—The meanest of us hath his servitors to do him such honour at the last !" replied Sancgraal, continuing his labour with wild earnestness. " But I see now what it is !—Some awkward worshipper has caused the chalice to fall, full of wine, and see—the Sancgraal lies shattered to pieces below the cup !"

" Wine ?" said Cromwel, stooping, dipping a finger in the fluid, and putting it to his nostrils with a shudder. " Ay, we had such wine as this, in runlets, on the field of Pavia, some brief while after the battle, my Lord Prior !"

" Why then, they have put some diseased wretch, for cure, in the recess, against constant forbidding !" replied Sancgraal. " Will it please your grace now to kneel ?"

" I will return some other day—when the winds have swept out these noisome airs from your church !" replied Wolsey, who had listened to this dialogue with evident interest and emotion. " I know not how it is—our heart fails us now !—Sirs, let us hence !"

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SWEATING SICKNESS.

On the following day—and the king's impatience would scarcely have allowed that interval, only it was impossible the presents, letters, and other propitiatory offerings could be prepared in less time—Roodspere took his departure for Hever Castle, in Kent. There the disgraced maid of honour had retired, under her father's care, to endure the agony of her own mind and the reproaches of the time-serving and disappointed knight, Sir Thomas Boleyn, concluding, with some reason, that his own prospects were placed under a cloud by the circumstances attending his daughter's failure. Moreover, no advantage seemed likely to accrue in any direction, Anne continuing to repulse with the utmost obstinacy and disdain every attempt of her royal lover to conciliate her pardon and reconcile her to his resolution in breaking off her purposed match.

Roodspere was the bearer of a casket of valuable jewels, of a passionate though somewhat pedantic and imperious love-letter, entreating the sun of beauty to return and en-

lighten the night that had reigned in the court ever since her departure, and in the heart of her king; appointing her father to a place he had long coveted and sued for, as treasurer of the royal household; and declaring that nothing else should be refused that Mistress Boleyn would accept as ransom for the captive heart of her sovereign-servant. Roodspere was furnished with an ample purse for his expenses, a horse from the royal stables, a safe-conduct, and three stout yeomen of the king's guard to enforce it, if need were. Nothing seemed wanting that might have added alacrity and good cheer to his undertaking. His conscience was satisfied, not only of its lawfulness, but of its express ordination, the result of all his researches into the case, long previously propounded to him by Wolsey, regarding the legitimacy of the king's marriage, had terminated most decisively, according to his judgment, in its condemnation. Henry's extravagant passion, as displayed in the parting interview with his supposed emissary, justified every calculation on its possible results. It was not likely that now, effectually debarred from all hopes of an union with her lover, and stimulated by revenge and ambition, Anne Boleyn would refuse to tread on the splendid path to be opened before her, terminating in a throne!—

He left his bride under the watchful guardianship of Bilney, and of the now united chivalry and views of interest of the formidable Bigod, whose hatred of his brother was an effectual safeguard against any machinations on Sancgraal's part, even if Lily's marriage had not effectually rebuked his sinister designs. His farewell with her, though of a nature so affecting as almost to deprive him of resolution for the enterprise, was yet alleviated by the joyful hopes he was enabled to give her, and her own most earnest and fevered desire that he should lose no unnecessary moment in converting them into realities. The spell of her ingrained superstitions, he perceived, could not otherwise be removed, but might effectually be so by the fulfilment of the cardinal's promises. And yet, with all these consolatory and brightening views, a languor and despondency which scarcely allowed him the necessary strength and energy to proceed in his task, weighed on his spirits as he left the Sanctuary.

Roodspere endeavoured to account to himself in some measure for this profound depression from an event of a gloomy nature that occurred before his departure. The swearing deserter had been taken suddenly ill in the midst of his cups, drinking to Roodspere's good success, on the previous evening—and with no slight ail-

ment, since, in his own words, he was as it were put into a bath of fire! He sent to entreat Roodspere, by the blood of Christ!—which was his usual dreadful oath—to come and shrive him cleaner than the monks could; which it seemed it was his impression the new teacher was well qualified to do. Supposing, from the suddenness of the man's disorder, that it was the result of his debauch, Roodspere nevertheless, with his habitual kindness, complied with the request, on his way out of the Sanctuary. But to his surprise, he found the poor wretch in the agonies of death, convulsed in the most frightful manner, by the action of a disease which the wild ruffianage surrounding their dying comrade's miserable couch, all united in averring had never previously been witnessed by any of them. The sufferer appeared to be under the influence of some strange poison, that knit all his sinews into knots; his whole person was in a fiery glow, and yet the sweat poured, as if from the perforations of a sponge, all over his person. Some said he must have been bitten by a mad dog; others, that a certain old woman, who was considered a witch, had placed him under some direful spell. But the delirious wretch himself was seized with the notion that the prior's curse was at work upon him, and that Roodspere

alone could counteract its baneful effects, by giving him absolution. And thus, after pouring, in a frightful rhapsody, a confession of the most enormous crimes, including two murders, in an infamous den in the Ambry—writhing all the while under the most extreme tortures—the criminal demanded instant absolution and remission of his offences. But when Roodspere explained, with tenderness, yet unflinchingly, that no reliance was to be placed in those exterior forms, and that the penitent could look only to God, and not to man, for any hope of pardon!—the miserable wretch went off into a paroxysm of fury and despair, yelled aloud for some one to bring him a "comfortable monk," and shouting, with the expiring strength of a bully's practised voice, that he had been deceived by Roodspere, to his damnation, made a rabid attempt to rush upon him from his straw, and destroy him. He was held back by the united strength of several men, and Roodspere was fain to retire, with a saddened spirit, from the scene.

He proceeded on his journey with that deep languor clinging round his heart, which he still strove to impute to purely moral causes. In effect, the ride into Kent, accomplished over a bad and devious road, but through a rich and smiling country, restored his strength

in a degree to encourage the notion. He rested that night in a wayside inn; but the exceeding oppression of his frame returned during the hours of slumber, so heavily, that, when morning came, he felt that he had scarcely energy left to mount his horse, and resume the route. Nevertheless he persevered, and again, with the fresh air and glow of the early morning, the lethargic faintness wore off his limbs, and the enthusiasm of his ideas revived with inspiring force. In this manner he arrived, while it was still early day, at Hever Castle.

He found affairs in the ancient fortified mansion bearing this title in a singular condition. Sir Thomas Boleyn, the master of the house, received the cardinal's messenger (it was as such that Roodspere presented himself) with the utmost respect; but confessed that his daughter, defying all duty and submission, had so constantly refused to give an answer to any of the king's own servants, that he had no hopes of her receiving one whom she would probably hold to come from much the same quarter. Nay, she had refused, with the utmost resolution, to see Henry himself, who had deigned to ride over from Greenwich in person, to assure her that, with the exception of her designs on the heir of Northum-

berland, his majesty was not inexorably displeased with her! She had locked herself in her chamber, whence no entreaties could induce her to come forth, until the king departed. Sir Thomas professed a convenient ignorance of all other reasons of contention and displeasure between Henry and the brilliant maid of honour—which it seemed all the siege of supplications addressed to her —messengers, presents, letters, and universal report—had in no way availed to remove.

This account was not very encouraging; but Roodspere hoped his name would produce a favourable effect, coupled with information that he brought the lady news it imported her most highly to hear—concerning the Lord Percy. It was so. Anne Boleyn consented, with an eagerness that greatly surprised her diplomatic sire, to receive this new ambassador. Roodspere was shown into a chamber wainscoted with black oak, relieved with an heraldic border of the arms of all the illustrious races with which the union of the parvenu Boleyns with the house of Norfolk, enabled them to claim affinity. She was seated before a table strewed with letters and various glittering toys—presents, doubtless, from her lover—perhaps endeavouring, by the contemplation of these pledges, to fortify her trust in his con-

stancy under their adverse fortune. Roodspere perceived that she was even then engaged in working two initials in a loveknot twisted in the form of a heart, on a silken banderol—which she probably hoped to find some means to send Percy in token of her own confidence and fidelity. The sight affected him to tears; and by this, coupled with the deep sadness and solemnity of his countenance, Anne's vivid fancy was startled with a sudden and terrible combination of ideas. "He is dead, then! The crowned tiger has fixed his barbarous fangs in his dear flesh, and rent him!" she exclaimed, with frantic impetuosity. "Speak out at once! I know I can believe in thee, for all thine honest looks!—Do not, do not, gentle clerk, kill me with half words—but say, at once, they have murdered him!"

Roodspere hastened to dispel this horrible fancy, though with a doubt whether to so vehemently-spirited a woman the intelligence he brought was not of equal sorrow. "The Lord Percy is not dead—save to you, lady! —He lives to all the world beside."

"If he lives, he lives mine—and mine only!—Mock me not with school allegories and twisted phrases, master scholar!" replied Anne. "Or—Heaven leave me my poor

wits!" she continued, with an hysterical peal of laughter. "Hath the false cardinal made a monk of him?—He might be so wrought upon, as but for me, he had been still the very slave of the scarlet traitor's frown!—And now in my enforced absence—and all my loving letters and messages, by mine own conspiring sire, denied passage to him!—Why, come the worst, what is it?—Only, good master doctor, that I can no longer keep the tune of your true doctrine, but must bid farewell to the light, too, and cloister me—unlike thy fair novice!—for the sick remainder of my days. When we are dead, they will not deny us to sleep together in the grave—and even there I know mine arms will open to welcome my gracious monk to an eternal Paraclete!"

Roodspere was so moved with this depth of tenderness in one whose light, coquettish brilliancy of superfice gave no intimation of feeling so profound, that he could not for some instants reply. He felt that he stood between a human heart and the misery of its entire existence, and he hesitated to utter the words that consigned it to its doom! But Sir Thomas Boleyn solved the humane perplexity. He had not accompanied Roodspere into the apartment, resolving to maintain his decent ignorance of the real subject of all this visitation; but he

had made some private inquiries among Roodspere's attendants, and now burst into the chamber, with the exclamation, "Fie on thee, daughter, to go mad for a popinjay that hath already mated him with another! Percy is married—married to his betrothed!"

"Married!—married to his betrothed!" shrieked Anne, starting up as if the roof were crushing in. "His betrothed?—Why, that is me!—Father, such jests as these do ill become your sober years and ripe discretion; they are such as children make in April, when they are young as the season!—Percy has sworn more oaths than there are drops on the glittering grass, after one of the showers, then, to wed with Anne Boleyn, or with none!—And well ye wot Anne Boleyn is not wedded yet!"

"Alas, alas!—but it is as true as that the winter wind is now sweeping through the bare boughs, lady!—With mine own eyes I saw the Lord Percy wedded to the Lady Mary Talbot, two yesters past, before the high altar of St. Edward!" said Roodspere, speaking hurriedly and confusedly, as an unwilling and unwonted butcher goes through his task.

Anne Boleyn looked at him—and rarely has even that complex and wonderful mirror of the human soul expressed such an infinitude of

contending emotions and thoughts, as did her eye at this moment. It was a mirror of lightning, in whose instantaneous expression astonishment, rage, despair, incredulity, and the most fearful conviction, blazed in a single glance!—an utterance of the whole storm of passions gathered in all their fearful strength in her soul! Roodspere's visage—a true index of the unutterable sorrow and compassion that filled his heart—presented an evidence that could not be rejected. "Is it even so?" she said at last, relaxing from a gaze of delirious intensity, and speaking like one in a bewildered dream. "Can all things else be true, and this man not?—Is yonder the sky?—Are these the walls and woodlands of Hever Castle?—Is this grey-bearded politician my father?—Am I, I?—Why, how is this, Anne Boleyn?—Is Shrewsbury's cheesecurd daughter preferred to thee?—Percy, false!—Tell me, good friends, do mariners still sail the seas, or doth water no longer upbear wood? Doth anything his proper function more?"

"Not preferred, lady!—Your lover yielded to threats, to terror, to the dominion of the pitiless cardinal!" said Roodspere.

"Why, then, the baser coward he, to yield him a recreant at a lowborn priest's behest!—I yielded not, I, that am a woman, when a

mighty king—no matter!—It shall not be always thus!—there are others that love Anne Boleyn, who—O, blessed Lord! and can it then be true that I have thrown my whole existence away upon this manless slave, and that this pain—this consuming gnaw—must abide for ever henceforth in my heart's core? —Shall Percy have sweet children, and they call Mary Talbot, mother?—God, my God! what have I done to merit this?—What had I done, ere I was create, to merit Thy wrath, that Thou hast brought me out of nothingness to set this hell aglow within my living breast?" She sunk to the table as she uttered this terrible demand, which human anguish has so often extorted, in pardoned blasphemy, with her hands clasped on her brows; and for some moments the two auditors listened with awe-stricken sadness to the paroxysm of grief and dry sobs in which the climax of the unhappy lady's suffering vented itself. Suddenly she raised her head, and, with eyes unwet by a single tear, but fearfully brilliant and blighted, she continued, in tones of unnatural calmness, "Well, sir, you have done your office—and, I thank you—very gently! Your axe, master executioner, is well edged and polished—you have put me to no needless pain!—But is this all your business with her that must remain

Anne Boleyn, master clerk?—Come you, indeed, from the most wise and virtuous Lord Cardinal of York —or from his worthy master, Nero, that a long while ago was emperor in Rome?—Hath *he* bidden you bring him my tears in a lachrymatory, to savour his wine withal?—You may tell him, and can see, that I shed none!—That cow has gone dry—to speak as we wontedly do in these country parts!"

"Chiefly, lady, I come from the king!—He sends you these jewels—this letter written with his own hands—and, by my lips, implores as a suppliant for life itself, that you will deign to return, in all honour and glory, to the court!" said Roodspere, producing his valuable charge, and placing them before the lady.

"No, there is nothing strange!—fire doth not burn now!" said Anne, gazing with wild wonder at the messenger. "Fear not; I am in no wise distraught!—I see and know that you are you, Master Roodspere!—the most seeming kind, religious, truehearted man ever I discoursed withal!—and yet you are here to play the pandar's part with a widow of three minutes' making!—For Percy is dead—oh, far more dead to me than death can ever make him to his wife!—his wife!—Percy's wife!—Oh, were this heart and soul of mine only fa-

shioned to be the charnel-house of so mean a corpse?—Had it been a hero's, now—some valiant spirit whose cypress a woman might have borne prouder than of all others' living laurels—that were much!—By this heavenly light! I think I should not grieve then!—But a cowardly shrinker from all manhood and honourableness—so poor a creature as this needs must be—and I, I, I—I who thought myself the world's match for good wit and understanding—to be cozened by such a paltry knave's professions!—would it not make a devil weep?—There will be rare sport in the court now!—How they will wreathe smiles when they hear Anne Boleyn's self must wear the willow, now!—Tell me, thou perfect contrary of thyself!—are all men like ye twain, very reverses of your outward shows?—Are murtherers the only pitiable lads, and branded thieves the only honest men?"

"Let me have speech, madam, and I will show, I come on no errand unseemly to any honourable opinion you may have of me!" said Roodspere, "Tarry, Sir Thomas Boleyn! I come to proffer your daughter no such unworthiness as perchance your wrong imputings place in my purposes hither!—Lady, if it please you, as plainly I deem to discern it pleaseth heaven—and shall beyond all measure displease

the tyrannous cardinal—you, whom he suffered not to be Percy's countess, shall live to be Henry's queen!—The hand of God is in it, who would raise an Esther to the people once more!—Wolsey himself acts but as the blind instrument in the work, whose barbarous deed has for ever severed you from your lover!—who is even now busied, heart and soul, in the unwifing and dethroning of the papistical Vashti, whose forfeit place shall be yours!—And you are but tempered in these cold waves of sorrow, lady, like the steels of the Tagus, to make you the more unbending weapon in the Great Wielder's hand!"

There was a very considerable pause. "What does he say?—Is he mad?" said Sir Thomas Boleyn, at last. "Unwifing and dethroning the queen's majesty!—All men of good information about the court, master doctor, report that the inquiry is raised simply for the more undoubted promulgation of the Lady Mary's right of inheritance, and satisfaction of her French wooer's scruple!"

Roodspere replied to this allegation by stating the incontestable personal knowledge he had accidently acquired of Wolsey's real intentions, on his first memorable visit to York Place. Then, with an eloquence which partook indeed of the effulgent utterance of an

inspiration, he expounded to the two amazed listeners the mighty scheme that had burst upon his imagination in the Chapel of St. Blaize. His words seemed to reel to his lips with the fulness of the ideas that sought expression there. The divorce, he averred, was an immutable and settled basis, on which this glorious project might much more easily be raised than the towering structure of personal ambition their common oppressor, the cardinal, hoped to build upon it. He enlarged on the unparralleled vehemence of the king's passion —the headstrong impulses by which he was swayed. Were he once convinced that he had no hopes of gratifying this absorbing sentiment but by a lawful marriage with its object, his ideas would speedily run, with their characteristic impetuosity, in that channel. What vengeance could be sweeter and meeter on the cardinal, than that he should be the means of clearing the path for the elevation of the person he had so deeply injured, whose influence might then suffice to overthrow his tyrannous ascendancy, and balk the supreme object of his ambition and existence — as he had already defeated hers?—To swell the full tide of her indignation against this personage, Roodspere gave a most exasperating detail of the threats and arguments Wolsey had used to vanquish Percy's

repugnance to the sacrifice, and a most moving one, of the utter prostration and anguish of the victim bridegroom. What reply could be at once more emphatic and victorious, to the cardinal's calumnies and insinuations, than her elevation to so glorious preeminence?—But a brighter crown than any of earthly dominion might also be achieved by her!—She might redeem the suffering and condemned Church of Christ from the bondage and persecutions of Haman, and become for ever famous in all annals as the ESTHER OF THE REFORMATION!

Sir Thomas Boleyn listened in incredulous silence to this effusion, which passion clothed in the most vivid colours of eloquence and persuasion—and looked at his daughter, in conclusion, with a politician's proper smile playing in ambiguous meanings on his lips. But there was a word in the rhapsody that struck with a jarring harmony on Anne Boleyn's sense, and seemed to rouse her whole being again into vehement vitality. "Revenge!—Revenge!—O, blessed clerk, was not that thy word?—No matter!—it is in thy meaning!—Percy shall not have cause to pity his forsaken love so much!—nor Jane Seymour lament over the downfall of pride so tenderly!—The cardinal, the cardinal!—yes, the cup of

their abominations is filled to overflowing!—On him, and all his accursed brood—his monks and their eaves dropping paramours—will I live to do—ay, ay, thou callest it a justice!—And it is so; but I will have more than justice—I will have vengeance!—From this hour I dedicate myself to this sole purpose and achievement!—He would have me the harlot of Henry, most religious vicar, would he?—he, that would not suffer me to be the wife of him I love, and who has made another, a tall, white, shapeless birch-tree, Mary Talbot, Percy's bride!—But I love him no more; I despise him! Alas, alas, it is the sharpest rankle of the wound, to be forced to despise most what I have loved most!—I could have mourned over his headless corpse less wofully!—Not the meanest of these baubles he gave me but I valued once beyond a king's ransom!—But now, my serving-wenches may have them to deck themselves withal!—But art thou sure he wept, good Raphael?—Why, then, I can weep too!—It shall be Wolsey's turn anon, if he *can* weep!"

And she yielded to a renewed paroxysm of grief, which, however, now took the milder form of tears.

In the midst of this passion she checked herself, and turning to both the lookers-on.

"Leave me awhile, Master Roodspere, and, good sir, my father! I will read the king's letter alone; and, meanwhile, send horse and man to bring my brother George hither. You are too wise for such whirling counsels, father —but madness also hath its subtleties!"

Roodspere thankfully complied, for his faintness now returned upon him so visibly that even Sir Thomas Boleyn, absorbed as he was in other cogitations, was compelled to notice it as he left the chamber, where Roodspere had certainly fulfilled the calculations of the soothsayer Hopkins. He imputed his lassitude to the fatigue of the journey, and entreated Sir Thomas to lose no time in sending a messenger for George Boleyn, whose influence over his sister he knew to be very great, and likely to be exerted in behalf of any plan of ambition and revenge. A horseman was immediately got in readiness, and he was at the same time the bearer of a letter, couched in the tenderest terms, from Roodspere to his wife, informing her that all was going on well, and that he was a little tired with his journey, but otherwise in good health and spirits. Nevertheless he began to discern an extraordinary hurry and confusion in his thoughts—the most vivid pains darted through his whole body—and he found it impossible to

partake of a morsel of the luxurious banquet provided by Sir Thomas for his guest, or to reply in any good set form to his innumerable questions. As early as possible he pleaded indisposition, and retired to the bed prepared for him; and he had no sooner stretched himself in the sheets, than he felt a sudden and terrible glow as of fire wrap all his limbs. He started up in horror and amazement, and then suddenly, a sweat as of burning lava burst over his skin, and he immediately recognised in himself the same symptoms as those he had observed in the swearing deserter! At first the thought of poison—of Sancgraal—of his skill in drugs and minerals, which he might have turned to as diabolical misuse as his other extraordinary gifts, occurred to him with nigh the force of conviction. But at the same instant—by what connexion of ideas we know not—he remembered the cardinal's description of the unknown malady coming in Campeius's train from Italy. Had it become wearied also of his delays, and crossed the seas before him? If so, was it inevitable death? Should he never behold his Lily again? Must he leave her exposed to the fiendish machinations of his enemy, destitute of all human aid and protection? While he debated these thoughts, his ideas whirled into a chaos; and the groom of the

chambers who came to call him in the subsequent morning, found him in a state of frenzy, tossing as it seemed in the height of a malignant fever on his couch.

No attention Sir Thomas Boleyn's notions of self-interest could bestow on so valuable a messenger, was lacking on the occasion. But the physician he summoned was as much puzzled as the worthy knight himself, what name to give to this new and extraordinary form of disease; until observing the gushes of humidity continually breaking over the fiery skin, the son of Galen murmured an opinion that it might, very properly at least, be styled the "sweating sickness!"—and this, it appeared, was already its popular name in England. George Boleyn, arriving in great haste from London, brought a message, in his turn, from the king, desiring Mistress Boleyn not to hazard her precious safety, in case she was willing to return to the court, by doing so, while an "epidemic plague," as his majesty styled it, which had broken out in Westminster and the city, with such incredible ravage and violence that in two days more persons had died than in as many previous years in the localities indicated, raged! There could no longer be any doubt that the messenger who came to offer a crown in Hever Castle, had also brought with

him a disease which was likely to render a shroud more necessary.

The purity of Roodspere's youthful blood produced in him a remarkable variety in the general manifestations of this disease—the cholera morbus of the fifteenth century, and very possibly identical with it, and with the Black Death of the fourteenth century. It is, perhaps, only an ignorance of history that allows us the dolorous egotism of imagining our age has invented a new form of pestilence! His disorder constantly receded from its climax, and instead of finishing the contest one way or another, in a few hours, which was ordinarily the case, an entire fortnight elapsed before it left him, weak and powerless as an unrooted waterflag on its wave! Nearly as long a period ensued ere he recovered the use of his rational faculties, and could understand how kindly and brotherly he had been treated by George Boleyn, though at the same time his father and sister had been attacked by the disease, and were still in very doubtful case. The rest of the news he learned were of a kind to go far to restore him to his delirium. The Sweating Sickness raged with such fury in London and Westminster that the king and his whole court had taken flight into the country. The Sanctuary was stated to be the

very headquarters of the disease; and such was the terror it diffused that London was deserted by all who could find the means of refuge elsewhere. Moral as well as physical effects of the most extraordinary nature had ensued; and Henry himself, struck with a panic superstition, had betaken him again to the society of his pious queen, and apparently abandoned all his amorous projects on her splendid rival.

The orders of his physician, but much more the deathly exhaustion of his powers, compelled Roodspere to relinquish the project he formed of immediately returning to London in quest of his wife, whose terrible condition in his absence, in the midst of such horrors, he feared even to imagine—though a still more terrible dread assailed him, that she might herself have fallen a victim to the plague. Finding that it was literally impossible for him to stand upright, Roodspere implored George Boleyn to procure him a messenger—but in vain. For no reward or promise, or command or menace, would any one whosoever consent to wend his way to the plague-stricken city! The royal yeomen had already left Hever, and returned to their master. There was no resource but to await the slow sanative operation of nature, which the impatience and agony of

Roodspere's mind retarded instead of accelerating. It was the property of the Sweating Sickness, by draining the blood of its moisture, to render it thick and cloggy in a strange degree, and subject the victim to every physical suffering incident to an almost suspended circulation. But Roodspere struggled indomitably with every painful and distressing symptom; and as soon as ever he found that he could go into the open air without swooning away, he ordered his horse to be made ready for his departure.

By that time Anne and her father, who had only had the disease in the mild form of a contagion transmitted through a body which retains so deadly a portion for its own use, were sufficiently recovered to see and speak with him. But Roodspere's ravening impatience scarcely permitted him to assist in the council to which he was summoned; and the extreme dejection of Anne herself, and the change in affairs, had apparently nullified the principal grounds of their coalition. But when Anne Boleyn learned the reason of his haste, she immediately assented to the propriety of his departure. "Ay, go, and go at once!" she said, "Hasten and save her whom you love! What is there on earth worth possessing but love? The devilish vampire of the

Abbey, who feeds on carcases, will be at his revels doubtless now in the Sanctuary! Even the king has forgotten Anne Boleyn! He has sacrificed me for nothing, not even for his own vile uses and lusts! I shall spend the rest of my days—they will not be many—in this dreary old house, where, nevertheless, yourself and your Lily may spend some happy days together! You shall be very welcome, certes! and, perhaps, some gleam of happiness may yet cross my heart, beholding yours! But you may tell the cardinal and the king, should they still have curiosity to know, that you have earned your wage! That Anne Boleyn *will* return to the court, whenever she is summoned!"

Roodspere rode into London on the following day, and the appalling allegory of the Revelations—Death on his pale horse—might have been supposed set in visual relief in the personage he presented, his steed happening to be of a very light fawn colour. Or, perhaps, he would have been better likened to the Azrael of the Mahometans—the angel of destruction—pacing through a city dedicated to his visitation! For, with an infinitely profounder sadness than the bony Gothic impersonation realises, the Mahometan death is an angel, of a serenely melancholy beauty, whose aspect rather soothes than repels! At the

desolation and terror visible on every countenance, was not caught from the passing apparition—Roodspere found it already there! The leaden-hued shadow of the tomb was on every visage—distraction and fear in every eye! Men hurried past each other as if they dreaded the concealed phantom of the plague in every form! And the havoc was, indeed, terrible! Historians have put it on record that in the towns in which it made any abode, one third at least of the inhabitants perished.

The ghostly rider entered Westminster. He saw, but scarcely heeded it, that York Place was closed. He passed on; the royal palace seemed also entirely abandoned; the only living object was a starling in the window of one of the yeomen of the guard, once celebrated as a gay and loquacious bird, but which now appeared to be moping on the perch, probably for lack of food, its master being dead. Roodspere entered the Abbey precincts on horseback, finding he could not walk; an unprecedented intrusion. Yet no janitor sprang forth to rebuke his unlicensed entry. He perceived that the gates of the Abbey church were wide open, and he heard a low muttered chaunt proceed therefrom—sickening with a deadly qualm as he missed the heaven-piercing notes of Dan Gloria. He reached the Gatehouse.

The Sanctuary doors stood widely open, but not a human creature appeared in its first narrow street. The Gatehouse itself seemed to be deserted; but by an unwished coincidence, as he approached, its door opened, and some half-dozen men, bearing a coffin of unusual proportions, come forth. At the head of these marched a strapping monk, in whose shrunken cheeks and flagging paunch it would not have been easy to recognise Cellerar Gildas! Was this the coffin of his virago love, of the terrible Long Meg of Westminster? Was her dire tongue silenced at last? Roodspere stopped not to inquire.

He entered the Sanctuary—he arrived at St. Julian-of-the-Pilgrims. As he sunk rather than alighted from his horse before it, a man was brought out, howling and shrieking with anguish, in a dirty blanket. It was Solomon Rogue-the-Rogue! Roodspere never asked why or whither he was borne. He perceived jailer Mugwort reeling drunkenly in the train of the howling convert, as if he had some function to perform in his attendance. Roodspere called to him, in his faint and spectral tones. "Yea, sir, yea!—you shall be attended to in your turn, but my poor wife is dead, and I must to the funeral! I am chief mourner, and there is never an onion to be had for love or money."

Roodspere dared hardly repeat his cry—yet he did! and it was now almost a shriek! But when Mugwort paused, and looked at him, evidently in horrified recognition, he felt he had no longer voice to utter his inquiry after the condition of his wife. The man understood the question of those gasping eyes, without words. "She is gone! Prior Sancgraal has taken her away, to save her from destruction with his spells! He is the only man among us that walks the pestilence unscathed; folk are safe under his shadow! Heaven keep your good wits, Master Roodspere; I must to my poor wife's funeral, and have never a tear in all my head to shed!"

"By force!—Was she taken by force?" was the inarticulate question.

"Nay, sir, of her own free will—to save her body and soul! She has not been long gone, and they said she was going to be a nun! For my part, I think she knew not what she was adoing ever after Master Bilney was taken ill, and began to rave so fearfully about God's judgments on those that do betray the truth! But my Lord Bigod would never have let her gone had it not been for the absolution! But he could not die, christianly speaking, without an absolution, after the example of roaring Black Mat, that was denied holy

ground for dying under ban and curse! And being, as a body may say, a dying man!"

"Where is he?" interjaculated Roodspere.

"Oh, in the Paradisus, sir. He was taken there, in Mistress Malkin's quarters, and will never stir thence but to the churchyard, if he is not gone already! But come, sir, be of good cheer. If he is alive, I know it will give him comfort to see you again, for he does nothing but rave of you and your sayings! and if you will take my shoulder for a prop, my wife may bury herself, or her gossip may help her into her grave as he hath many times into a place that pleased him better afore!—and we will go to the lord governor!"—a title the enthusiasm of the Sanctuary had conferred on Bigod.

Roodspere complied; and in a few instants they were in the Paradisus, where, in the garret of a miserable hovel, stretched on straw, in the last exhaustion of the malady, lay the once noble and courtly Bigod of Chepstow. His martial and commanding person lay powerless as a babe of a month's nouriture on the couch, where, faithful, even in degradation so deep, to the generous ministrations of the sex, Mistress Malkin bathed his oozing brows with vinegar and water—then supposed to be the proper remedies. He knew Roodspere imme-

diately, though evidently with some wandering of the imagination. "Out upon it! here is the whey-faced clerk come for his silly-sooth wife to me from the grave! Tell him, Malkin, that I could not help it!—that Sancgraal frightened a stout fellow of my inches to the death, that have led an onset in a stricken field, and swept all before me! How might she help herself, then, poor girl? The more when she knew it was her disobedience and failure in her plight that brought the whole plague upon us! And truly it was against kind for a bastard to wed his half-sister, say what ye may, and ye have a silver tongue, master doctor, to persuade! And was it not too cruel of ye to spend so much time in feasts and revels at Hever while we, poor devils, suffered such perdition? But how fares Mistress Anne? Alack, alack, I shall never see her bright eyes again!—I can scarcely see the sun at noonday now! Can I, Malkin? You told me but now that it was noonday!"

"Know ye—I charge ye on your hopes as a dying man—know ye, where Lily now is?" said Roodspere—but Bigod only stared at him, gave a vacant laugh, and turned uneasily away upon his pillow.

"It is not an hour hence, sir, since she was led away into the church, to take the Black

Veil of our Lady for the redemption of us all from the curse of having kept her, against reason, among us from the church!" said Mistress Malkin.

Within half a dozen minutes, restored as if supernaturally, to all his powers, Roodspere entered the Abbey church of Westminster. It was crowded with devotees, on their knees before the various shrines, in the most earnest supplication, or wandering drearily about with lighted tapers and offerings to those of the saints deemed the most powerful in the heavenly court. The chapel of St. Edward was locked and barred against all admittance, but it was surrounded by a devote multitude, clustering like bees upon a hive when the entrance is closed by some accidental leaf or wandering snail. Roodspere distinguished the chaunt of female voices, mournful and tremulous, although the anthem they sung was one of triumph and rejoicing, proceeding from the chapel of our Lady; and he passed on thither, as if he were as shadowy as he looked, through the throng. He reached the arabesque gates of the chapel of Henry VII., visible in their minutest flourish and ornament, in the extraordinary blaze of light within it. The whole interior of the chapel was lit up more brilliantly than by the clouded noonday sun, in the blaze of a myriad of wax

tapers. The altar and its recess were entirely hung with cloth-of-silver, and decked with artificial lilies, snowdrops, and other emblems of virgin chastity, and the statue of the Virgin, with its awful veil upon it, was restored to its accustomed place.

The occasion of these preparations was sufficiently obvious to any spectator accustomed to the religious ceremonies of the age. A numerous group of Benedictine nuns knelt on the steps of the altar around a youthful female figure, the mocking splendour of whose garb, and bridal veil of glistening silver, surmounted by a chaplet of white roses, effectually distinguished her as a novice engaged in the ceremonial of her reception.

All this Roodspere speedily ascertained. The gates were closed, and the rigid figure of a monk leaned with his back against them, who, when he tapped, continued insensible to all his signals for admittance. But another in the choir, whose eyes by chance fell upon him, stepped hurriedly forward, opened a fold of the grill, and pointed empathically onward. It was Almoner Benson. Neither spoke a word, and Roodspere glided on, but with all his good speed he arrived too late! As he approached he plainly distinguished the words, from Sancgraal's lips, "Her vows

are spoken! She is heaven's at last, and I revoke my curse on this miserable people!" he was saying. "The espousals are completed! and now thou art bound, sister, by a vow which to break is damnation! and the miraculous manifestation which declared the will of our Lady is accomplished! Rejoice and fear not but that the beatitude of that calm of love that follows its full possession, will descend upon thy soul anon! The heavenly spouse, whose beauty fills the beaming chambers of heaven with eternal bliss, is thine! But remember, this celestial Lord cannot, like a mortal one, be deceived; and he demands the sacrifice of your being, of your soul, body, thoughts, powers, uses, in their entirety, and for all eternity! Your soul must burn wholly with this pure flame, like that of subtle ethers, without heat, but all absorpt! Never again must thou listen to the corrupting poisons that fall from the lips of him who once dared to call himself your husband! He is a heretic —a disbeliever in God, in our Lady, and in the fiend himself! His unpunished crimes have brought upon this whole unhappy realm the pestilence that rages around us! And now with these soon-withering flowers, thou biddest farewell to the pomps and vanities of the world—to its delights that fade even in their

earliest possession, as the appleblossoms shake from the boughs when one would gather them!" He threw the flowers beneath his feet as he spoke, and trampled them as if with the deformed talons of a fiend! Lily-Virgin remained rigid and fixed as marble, without uttering any sound; and Sancgraal was raising the lustrous veil to complete the spoliation of the victim, when Roodspere stepped forward. "What do ye here with this lady, my wife?" he exclaimed. "What strange mummery is this? Lily, my wife, my wife! Dost thou not know me, sweet one? I am here!"

A shriek, that rung through all the reverberating keystones of the roof, was heard; the new nun herself tore off her glistering veil, and stared aghast, but with open arms, at the apparition before her—for such, and no other, even in the eyes of love, did that blighted form irresistibly suggest itself to be. "Oh, he is dead then—he is dead!—and ye have cheated me! He is not flaunting it in this new gorgeous harlot's palace whereof ye spoke—and his ghost is here to witness that ye lied!"

"Master Roodspere, ye must needs discern your presence here is alike perilous to others and yourself! The people also have now discerned who are their true benefactors and

shepherds, and will no longer suffer a wolf in the fold, whose gnawings brought down so deadly a murrain upon them!" said Sancgraal, with the calm of infinite and gratified malice. "But, nay," he added, after a slight pause, "stay if thou wilt, and bear witness to all the world of the completion of this saving act! Give me the scissors, sister Barbara!—nothing remains now but to sever these gleaming tendrils that have tangled so vile a heart! Where is the prioress, Juliana? She should receive her from our hands!"

Barbara instantly stepped forward, with the very look of the haggish destiny of antiquity, whose office it was to put the finish on mortal sufferings, and with the required instruments. They were a pair of silver shears, part of the miraculous plate of the Abbey, reported and believed to be the very instrument with which St. Ursula despoiled her eleven thousand followers of the most beautiful adornment of their sex.

"My lord, our prioress refused to come, saying, if what was rumoured concerning our new sister, and her confessor, was true, she would not receive her among us to corrupt and taint us all!" replied Sister Barbara, handing the fatal shears to the prior.

"Said she so? From this hour then she

is deposed—but not for this offence only—and her office, sister Barbara, is yours!" returned Sancgraal, but never for a moment relaxing his gaze on the silent figures before him.

Roodspere felt but too well that, personally powerless as he was, surrounded by enemies, within cry of an exasperated and superstition-stricken mob, all idea of a forcible rescue was entirely out of the question; and he soon perceived, with inexpressible anguish, that equally was every moral influence placed beyond his wield. He spoke to Lily, he called her by the most endearing and impassioned names familiar on the lips of their mutual love!—but she continued to gaze at him as at some incomprehensible and terrible being, with large, widening, glazed blue eyes, until he began to tremble for her sanity. The effort to reconcile the terrible inventions and falsehoods of Sancgraal, with the pallid reality she beheld before her, had in effect, and very evidently, unsettled her reason. It failed in the attempt; and she continued to gaze passively, perhaps in a state of moral insensibility, at the speaker—for a time, indeed, after he had become silent, terrified in turn by the unmeaning attention accorded to his words.

"And now, sisters, remove this glistering garment of earthly vanity, and put that robe

on your new sister, which she shall only change for one white and lustrous as the sun! Our Lady herself will lend her repieced veil!" said Sancgraal, and Lily-Virgin turned with a helpless but implicit shudder at Barbara's signal, to receive the dark investiture.

The black robe of a professed nun suddenly covered the sheen of Lily's garments, and she started! That was all. Sancgraal then raised a floss of her beautiful hair, which shone in his cruel hand like a ray of sunshine on the willows over a rock. It fell rapidly beneath his mowing strokes, while Roodspere looked on in dreamy vacuity, essaying to speak, essaying to raise his arms, but scarcely stirring any muscle in the exhausted effort! In a moment the severed locks fell in an infinitude of shining rings at the feet of Lily. One of these she raised, twisted it in her slender fingers, and handed it with a strange smile over to Roodspere.

It was at this moment that a voice murmured in Roodspere's ear, "Come forth!—thou art dying here!—This is no place wherein such as thou shouldst die!"

Roodspere knew then that his senses had altogether lost their functions. The compassionate whisper was in the tones of Father Gislebert; they were his arms that seemed to

encircle him; it was he who supported him forth into the open cemetery!—yet it seemed still to be he who, when he awoke again, sate at his bedhead, in St. Julian-of-the-Pilgrims, and held reviving essences to his death-clenched nostrils, with an anxious and a skilful hand.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ANNE BOLEYN.

THE plague of the Sweating Sickness was not stayed until it had traversed the whole island, spreading death and desolation wherever any aggregate of population offered a field worthy of its terrible energies. It abated very slowly in London, and especially in Westminster, where it first appeared. It was not until the spring of the following year that the pestilence entirely ceased, and men resumed their confidence in existence, and returned to their customary pursuits and passions. Death passed with his besom of destruction, and the politic insects he had omitted to brush away, threaded their lines anew, and set to work with as ardent industry as ever, to repiece their ravelled webs. Never was the proverb of the Devil sick and well again better exemplified in practice. No sooner had the sunshine closed for a little while over the graves —before the first grass was green upon them— than every vacant place seemed filled again; the old routine of pleasure and occupation

resumed its staggered march; and indeed people seemed to revert, with fresh avidity for the interruption, to their accustomed avocations and works—the evil ones especially. The court returned to Westminster, and the proceedings regarding the legitimacy of the King's marriage, were resumed with an activity and openness that roused an universal agitation and curiosity. Wolsey's appointed colleague in the decision, Cardinal Campeggio, had arrived; and the commencement of the proceedings in this extraordinary case awaited only the completion of some formal and technical preliminaries.

The attention of the courtiers was, meanwhile, in a remarkable degree, divided with the observation of another portent. It was known Anne Boleyn had consented to resume her place at the court; but upon what terms was only matter of the keenest surmise and interest. Sometime before the king was permitted by his advisers to return to the capital, Anne arrived, and remained in her father's house, in London, apparently in great tranquillity,—though in unusual retirement and avoidance of company. But it was well known in the court that letters and messengers were continually passing between her and t he king—according to the prevalent and

sufficiently natural opinion, negotiating the terms of a dishonourable surrender. Yet men of profounder reflection than the frivolous loungers in the antechambers of a court, knew not how to reconcile the fact that the principal agent in this diplomacy—the constant counsellor, and most trusted adviser of the ascendant beauty herself—was a man now familiarly known among the citizens of London as one of the most learned, virtuous, and enthusiastic expounders of the new doctrines in religion. And this man was Raphael Roodspere.

Roodspere recovered, after a considerable lapse of time, during which his existence seemed to hang on every breath he drew, from the lethargic exhaustion alike of his bodily and mental powers, that followed the climax of suffering he sustained in the immolation of Lily-Virgin. During this whole period he was attended by Father Gislebert himself, with the most unceasing care and vigilance, as if he had been a dear and cherished son, whose existence he would preserve at every cost to his own comfort and convenience. He even took up his abode in St. Julian's to watch over him personally, and never remitted from this vigilance even when Bilney recovered sufficiently from his own

attack to undertake the attendance of his friend. And yet the society of the elder reformer was evidently in the highest degree distasteful to Gislebert, and it was by no means plain that any kindly or compassionate feeling towards Roodspere was at the root of his pertinacious service. Nay, it was made evident at last, that some other motive worked in this unusual manifestation; for no sooner was Roodspere sufficiently recovered to obey his behest, than he urged upon him, with inconceivable earnestness and importunity, to leave the Sanctuary, and all its dangerous propinquity. Roodspere shuddered to discern—which he could not but conclude he did—that the old man himself, idolatrous admirer and enhancer of his pupil as he was, dreaded, that he projected some deadly mischief against the man he had already injured so far beyond any possible reparation!—But the aspect of the Sanctuary had become to Roodspere himself intolerable. Now that the heavenly radiance of love was withdrawn from its noisome and sombre shadows, all that was disgusting and repulsive in such a haunt of crime and misery, presented themselves in their most hideous exaggerations to his contemplation. The treasurer had earned some claim upon his forbearance; and, in christian charity as well

as reasonable regard for his own safety, he desired not to expose the merciless prior to the temptation offered by facilities for a new gratification of his insatiate spirit of revenge. This safety was still dear to him, both as affording some feeble guarantee of protection to his immured wife, and because it became daily more evident that the birth of great events was at hand, in which he might prove of signal service to the cause he had embarked in. The space of a few months had produced the most remarkable exhibition of the progress of the new ideas it could have been possible to hope. The earth heaved in every direction with their mighty stir for emancipation! The seed cast, as it seemed, so sparsely and vaguely over the surface, sprang up in a myriad-fold increase, in every direction. A secret but numerous and daily increasing congregation of the new religionists, in London, among whom Hunne's son-in-law was a principal personage, fervently entreated him to take upon him the ministration of their spreading communion. Roodspere complied, induced partly by Bilney's exhortations, who, himself seized with a renewed fever of enthusiasm, shortly after departed on a missionary ramble throughout the towns and villages of his native county, preaching, after the manner of

the ancient apostles, in deserts and wilds, as well as from the steps of temples, in the market-squares, and other places of the fullest resort.

George Boleyn found Roodspere domiciled in the city, strenuously engaged in the office he had taken upon himself, when he sought him to deliver his sister's earnest summons to her presence. She had arrived in London, in obedience to a royal mandate, or supplication—identical terms in the vocabulary of Henry VIII. Roodspere immediately complied; and returned to his city friends only to resign his functions among them, but with an explanation to his chief partizans that in a good degree reconciled them to the loss; and they accepted a successor from his recommendation, in the person of Master Hugh Latimer of Cambridge.

Roodspere perceived, and did not hesitate for an instant to set forward, on the new path of duty opened to him in Anne Boleyn's proposition that, under the designation of chaplain, he should become her adviser and guardian in the dangerous mazes she was about to enter, pursuing the dazzling illusion which was henceforth to recompense her for the infinite loss she had sustained in the only reality of human existence. He perceived but

too well the hazardous nature of the enterprize he had himself put upon her attainment —in which all was staked on the resolution and virtue of a beautiful and coquettish woman, wooed by a king, and surrounded by every temptation power and magnificence could offer—not to feel the necessity of lending every possible stay and guidance. His mere presence was in itself a memento of her injuries, and an incentive to those feelings of mortified pride and baffled tenderness which were those on which rested all hopes of a successful issue in the attempt to place the new Esther on the throne of her capricious and violently-passioned Ahasuerus. And Roodspere was also as yet almost alone with her in the secret of the great project they had in view—could alone keep the splendid destiny, that awaited literally to crown her perseverance, constantly in view, and display it in its most dazzling lights. There was a community in their fates, and in their common wrongs, that gave him all the intuition of sympathy in contriving the means to influence her impassioned but capricious and unstable character. And he alone possessed, or dared exercise the right, of breathing into her spirit the sublime conviction that elevated, what was else something very much resembling a trifling court intrigue, into the

grandeur of an august and religious consummation, deciding the destinies of nations! A consideration of weight with the lofty though volatile and changeably-spirited woman whom he thus swayed. Anne Boleyn had not, it is true, fathomed the depths of the great argument she was destined to give the triumph to; but the church of Rome, personified in the person of Cardinal Wolsey, needed no other reasoning or proof to establish it in her convictions, as the most detestable and tyrannous of usurpations!

Roodspere had practically found it so; and a sense of intolerable wrongs was added to his sublime fanaticism—if by that name we cold descendants of the martyrs and apostles of that awfully glorious age—must call the absorbing fervour of religious conviction. No means of redemption for the object of his unwavering love appeared but in the overthrow of the system that had enthralled her in its meshes. He made many vain attempts to ascertain his stolen bride's real position and sentiments. Clerkenwell was become to him a forbidden place; by no request or entreaty could he obtain access, or glean any intelligence as to what was going on within its barred and guarded walls. The result of the most persevering efforts on his part only esta-

blished the conviction in his mind, that Lily-Virgin was surrounded by a jealous guardianship, which combined the rigour of a state prison to the seclusion of the cloister. The entire polity that had prevailed under the deposed prioress, Juliana Brocas, was changed. Either actuated by her own fanatic bigotry or by the influence of ascetic counsellors, the new superioress, Barbara, had managed to change the nunnery of Clerkenwell into a model of a rigid conventual establishment. All intercourse with the external world was strictly forbidden; and Roodspere found a special prohibition in force against himself. His entrance was even refused with a degree of violence and insolence by the new porters whom he found posted at the gates, and in whom he recognized some of the sweepings of the Sanctuary. The nuns no longer confided their protection, as of old, to their own hearty and loyal vassalage. There could be no doubt, therefore, if for no other reason, that Prior Sancgraal's ascendancy was absolute in the nunnery. And as to how he might, or did use it, Roodspere was compelled to remain in the most tormenting ignorance and apprehension. He made several but as entirely fruitless applications for redress, to Wolsey, claiming the security he had plighted for Lily-

Virgin during his own absence on his successful mission. The Cardinal returned no answer to all his supplications or demands, and utterly refused to grant him an audience, or to admit him to his presence in any manner. Roodspere's enemies and his own superstitions, had evidently regained entirely the sway. Thus all he had to trust to was his woful knowledge of Lily-Virgin's former love for him—how far shaken, by what artifices so utterly baffled, he could only despairingly conjecture! The sole consolation that remained was to labour incessantly at the destruction of the system, and of the power of the men, who kept him thus perpetually in anguish and suspense. Or in the pauses of his nigh constant labour and watchfulness, to wander round the high walls of Clerkenwell Close, in the melancholy hope that he might catch some glimpse of its imprisoned cynosure.

But now events appeared at last to be approaching some crisis. It was certainly known that the king was on his return to London; and, from the most various and opposite motives, the courtiers looked forward to the possible results of the reunion of Henry and his offended favourite with the most intense anxiety. But it appeared that Wolsey imagined he had found means to reinstate himself

in her good opinion, or was determined to make every effort to effect so desirable a result. The king's arrival had not yet taken place when he sent a letter to Mistress Boleyn, couched in the humblest strains of adulation and homage, entreating that, as he had so far been the happy medium of reconciling her with her angry prince, she would reward him by assenting to make his palace of York Place the scene of their blissful reconciliation. For this purpose he intended to surpass all his former doings, in the like most royal festivities, in a banquet and masque, to which he humbly invited her glorious presence. The king had already most benignly accepted a similar lowly request. The epistle concluded in an hyperbolical strain of compliment and laudation of the beauty and surpassing virtues of Mistress Anne, and with a declaration that if she would suffer him to become so, thenceforth she should find in him the faithfullest and most diligent servant ever any lady, though she were sovereign, could boast!

Roodspere most earnestly counselled his patroness not to accept this invitation. "Trust me, madam," he said, "the cardinal plots with the king, and lays ambush with him to waylay and defeat your honour."

"And therefore I will go!—therefore I have

promised to go before consulting you thereupon, brother Raphael!" said Anne, with eyes that sparkled with disdain and pride. "They deem, no doubt, that because I have allowed them to make my father a viscount, and to send him honestly out of the way on his French embassy—because I am here—that I have yielded me to their base wills! So I must make this king-priest and priest-king both understand, at once and for ever, that no meaner bribe than a crown can buy her whom perchance they think to purchase with a tinselled show of marchpane and comfits! Henry shall share the anguish he has inflicted, and Wolsey know that his labours shall but end in making his worst foe his sovereign!"

In vain Roodspere reasoned against this impolitic resolve, which too soothingly flattered the internal pangs of resentment and disappointed feeling in Anne's heart to be withstood. He was obliged to adopt another argument. "But there are dangers, madam, the which, though I venture not to declare more fully, your own wisdom may well suggest of what it were to put yourself in the grasp of the king's furious passions, served by so crafty and unscrupulous an accomplice as the cardi-

nal hath ever shown himself to be in his master's will."

"Master doctor," replied Anne, colouring deeply, but with a smile in which anguish struggled with pride and defiance. "Wit ye well that I understand the cardinal's subtleties and plans as if I nestled in the hollow of his false heart! But I am in no danger from them. And for the king!—I know that I am as one who hath a talisman which, for its glory and brightness only, he cherishes dearer than life; but which is also a magic spell to obtain all earthly power and dominion! What entreaties can win from such a one his gem?"

"But the robber's violence is to be dreaded! Even violence, I know not the cardinal would interfere to prevent!" replied Roodspere.

"No, Roodspere, no!—The king is not so unkingly a king—I will even hope the cardinal is not so unpriestly a priest as to abet such villany! The Lord Sands assured me the banquet and pageants are to be the stateliest ever devised, with the most numerous guests! But rest ye content; I will take with me twain whom thyself shalt deem unbribable and faithful as the guardian angels of our ways, to accompany all my steps in York Place! Thou shalt be one of them, though ye be given more to books than

banquets! The other!—how say ye?—if Lucrece had braided her hair with this French bodkin, would she have lacked a friend in her need so much as the story saith she did?"

Sunset was the time named for the assemblage of the guests, on this memorable occasion, at York Place; and thither, punctually as the hour, Anne Boleyn proceeded, with a modest retinue. Roodspere was among these, and the only one above menial rank, her brother having been despatched with his father on the embassy to France. It pleased her to enter the cardinal's palace leaning on Roodspere's arm—no welcome addition certainly to her own in reality little desired presence. Nevertheless, Wolsey surpassed all his own most gorgeous doings in the preparations for this banquet, which he hoped would prove a feast of reconciliation with the offended lady of the ascendant. Well aware of the inconstancy and caprice of Henry's passions, when once they had attained their object, he was consoled for the baseness of the office he had taken upon himself, by the prospect he imagined he saw before him of securing his speedy emancipation from the danger of this new and formidable rival. At the same time, it was a favourable opportunity, he thought, of evincing his zeal for his

master's satisfaction, and removing the last vestige of his displeasure.

The apartments in which the intended oblation was welcomed, blazed from end to end with an unrivalled display of Wolsey's pomp and riches. His most precious and beautiful tapestries — especially those of soft and amorous subjects—covered the walls. The sideboards, piled to a great height, displayed his enormous wealth in plate and jewelled ornaments, the gifts of great kings and princes, or marvels of art presented by the emulous adulation of his courtiers. All who sought the favour or influence of the potent minister commenced their suits with some rich present to win his notice. A more brilliant and sparkling daylight was shed in place of the departed one, from thousands of torches and tapers, painted and gilded, and set in gold and silver candelabra, which poured an affluence of artificial sunshine through the numerous chambers of state prepared for the company. All these apartments were either carpeted with rich stuffs, or strewed with rushes and herbs that diffused sweet odours as they were trampled on — such as lavender and rue. Crowds of musicians and singers, stationed in galleries and secret choirs, partitioned off for the purpose, filled every quarter

of the palace with harmony. A multitude of ladies, most of them of high rank, and purposely selected for their beauty and grace, were assembled to receive Anne with as much state and honour as if she had been already queen; insomuch that the worthy chronicler in whose record we find the particulars, declares that it was "the most goodliest array" he had ever witnessed, and a "celestial heaven of beauty and gorgeousness" to look upon! And the potent master of all this luxury, the pontifical cardinal himself, attended by his numerous household, bearing torches, and a great retinue besides of noblemen and gentlemen, met Mistress Boleyn where he only condescended in general to welcome royal visitation—at the foot of the staircase in the grand hall of York Place.

It might have been that Wolsey hoped, in assembling so rich a concourse of beauties, to get the enamoured Henry to discern there were other charms as worthy of consideration as those of his disdainful choice. But he was disappointed in this expectation, and he could not but own it inwardly when he perceived Anne Boleyn's approach. The lustre of her beauty was enhanced by a dress of extraordinary magnificence, as that of a brilliant is produced by its setting; and passion, and

the determination to vanquish, heightened every charm with a nameless glow of inspiration and supremacy. Wolsey's eyes confessed dread while they endeavoured merely to express admiration, encountering this blaze of beauty; and although, with an exquisite flattery, he shaded them as if dazzled when they met. "Here is the light that makes all our counterfeit daylight dim!—ay, the great sun himself, shunning comparison, hath hidden himself behind the curtains of the night!" he said, with much gallantry, and more truth than it rejoiced him to acknowledge. "Henceforth he must be reputed for a very recreant, that has fled the field!"

"The field is your palace, my lord cardinal; but it is not likened in common report, that I have heard, to a heaven!" replied Anne, tranquilly—and yet Wolsey was startled with the intonation of the words.

"Where the sun is, there is day! Where heavenly things are, there is heaven!—and you are here, Mistress Anne!" replied the politic cardinal. "But be it whatsoever it may else, it is yours, lady, with its master; and I trust you will suffer me to bid you welcome with a loving kiss, that shall ensure you of a true vassal's homage and fealty!"

"Kissing is of old custom—'Hail, master!'

to wit. But I do not fear infection—of the sickness—from my lord cardinal, that I should refuse so gracious a welcome!" said Anne, who felt the necessity of submitting to so customary a salutation. But she only turned her cheek to Wolsey's pressure, and he was almost visibly alarmed when, applying his lips, he felt the glow of the angry blood that mounted to them. But the next instant Anne yielded to the sorrowful recollections that rushed upon her, and tears rained in a golden shower from her eyes. Nevertheless, she gave her hand to the cardinal, who stooped and kissed it also, anxious not to seem to observe this display of emotion. He then led her through the lines of his tall yeomen into the sumptuous gallery where Roodspere had his first ill-omened interview with his unfortunate bride.

Anne was received with great and, for the most part, sincere delight by the groups assembled to greet her in this immense chamber of presence. Wyatt, and a numerous throng of her admirers, instantly surrounded her with their adorations, and she relinquished the cardinal's convoy with almost undissembled satisfaction and suddenness. Roodspere, who followed in her train, on receiving a direct command from her, was soon astonished and alarmed to see her resume all the exuberance

and vivacity of her reckless wit and coquetry among the gallants and cavaliers whose familiarity should have been so carefully eschewed by one who aspired to share the throne of the haughty and jealous Henry. But his warning eye sought hers in vain, while Wolsey, a master of the art of conversation, contributed his own gaiety and rising spirits to increase the merriment. He did not even shun a species of combat to which Anne's sarcastic allusions and remarks continually challenged him; and by a string of repartees, mingled with the most artful and splendid compliments, in reality seemed to succeed in a strange degree in mollifying the asperity of her tone. He appeared to consider no honour too great to be shown to his beauteous guest; and this was still more emphatically evinced when on a sudden his chamberlain, the Lord Sands, came in and whispered him. The cardinal then announced, with great semblance of vexation and disappointment, that the king had sent an excuse, on the score of great weariness at a game of tennis; but he declared that the entertainment should proceed all the same. To his surprise, Anne Boleyn's manner rather gained than lost in vivacity and sprightliness after this announcement; and she bated no jot of her good cheer when the news seemed

confirmed, by the immediate preparations made for the banquet. Jane Seymour simpered meekly, and the Ladies Boleyn and Wingfield laughed aloud.

The boards were spread with fine damask, and Wolsey's solitary state was prepared at the head of two vast tables, covered with every imaginable delicacy. His chair was more properly a throne of extraordinary splendour, under a royal canopy of velvet and gold; and as he took his place, his scarlet and jewelled robes shone with a golden glimmer in the reflection of the lofty sideboard, blazing with superb plate, behind him. It was rather the banquet of an emperor at his coronation feast than of a subject and of a priest, on an ordinary occasion of festivity. The guests were led to their places with all ceremony by his officers, and Anne was placed the first on his right hand, below the dais on which he sate enthroned. All his desire to conciliate the new power could not bend his pride to admit her to share his elevation; or some other motive influenced him. Then, to a roaring triumph of drums, trumpets, and hautboys, the first course was served; and Anne then, indeed, began to betray some symptoms of uneasiness.

During the discussion of this refection, the

cardinal showed outwardly only the lively cheer and encouragement of an hospitable host. But he watched Anne with incessant attention, and was well pleased to observe how frequently she bit her rich nether lip, and how her gaiety began to flag. But, as if observing and suspecting nothing, he continued to press her to partake of the choice delicacies served, and, above all, Roodspere noticed that he earnestly and very frequently solicited her to join him in wine-pledges. Anne always complied, and, indeed, she could not avoid doing so, according to the reigning code of manners. But Roodspere, whom she had directed, to the general surprise, to take a seat beside her, observed with satisfaction, that she never suffered the wine to pass her lips. In vain the cardinal's assiduous cupbearers constantly renewed the draught: a few drops sufficed.

This interlude concluded in a manner Wolsey perhaps thought was only anticipated by those in the secret. A sudden discharge of the great guns called chambers, from the watergate of York Place, shook the banquet-room, and made many of the guests start in amazement from their seats. The cardinal, smiling, but putting on an affectation of surprise, desired his officers to look from

the windows on the river, and ascertain the cause of the disturbance. But the guests, among whom Anne Boleyn was foremost, had already made a rush thither. "The king! the king!" she then exclaimed, joyfully, but somewhat wildly, clapping her hands over her head. The more methodical and well-instructed chamberlain, Lord Sands, observed, on the contrary, that they were strangers who appeared to have come from some remote land, and probably having heard of his grace's glorious company and banquet, had come, as strangers, to request his hospitality.

"Let all be seated again," said Wolsey, rising with some trepidation. "I will myself into the hall to encounter and bid them welcome, and I doubt not soon to return with a right noble and seemly addition to our company."

It was the etiquette to fall into the king's notions when he pleased to present himself incognito, or in the exhibition of some pageant; which it seemed was his purpose on this occasion. The company accordingly resumed their seats, and awaited the cardinal's return amidst a busy hum of conjecture, while the ordnance continued to resound from the battlements over the gateway. They were not kept long in suspense: in a few minutes Wolsey

re-entered and smilingly, and yet with agitation, desired the guests all to be under no apprehension, and to keep their seats, since the arrival consisted only of divers pilgrims, who announced themselves on their way to the shrine of a certain goddess, styled "Parfaicte Blisse," who ventured in at that hour to discern if by chance she might be among them there. Hardly were the words said, before a throng of persons, in pilgrims' weeds, of sober gray, with marigolds instead of cockleshells around their hats, entered the gallery. The foremost of these was the king, easily distinguishable, although he, as well as his courtiers, wore masks.

The visitors were received with great reverence, the whole company standing. Wolsey then took up the word. "Sirs, pilgrims," he said, "ye come, as we learn, in search of the goddess 'Parfaicte Blisse.' If she be here, she will make ye, I doubt not, very heartily welcome, and ye will attain the end of your pilgrimage, without further toil and weariness, of which belike ye have already had enow!"

"In very troth, my lord, she is here!—sirs, we need travel no farther—she is here!" exclaimed Henry, in a transport of joy, throwing off his pilgrim's robe, and standing confessed

in a dazzling array of royal garniture. He then hastened with something of wild eagerness towards Mistress Anne. But now her manner suddenly and completely changed, from one of extreme gaiety and nonchalance, to a queenly dignity and grace, though she knelt before the sovereign as he approached, while snatching her hands in his, and covering them with ravenous kisses, pressing them to his lips and heart alternately, the king hurriedly raised her, and drew her towards him, as if to embrace her before the whole company. But she retreated with something of haughtiness and disdain, and, in a very calm and cold manner, repulsed the familiarity with words that lingered long in the recollection of those who heard them. "Nay, sir, Parfaicte Blisse is not so readily attained on earth! Your pilgrimage, I fear me, is not ended yet!"

"Well, since your grace and the divinity you serve have been so long asunder, ye may have some private tidings for each other's credence!" said Wolsey, eagerly, "Will it please ye to follow me, and I shall lead ye where your communication may be as private as in the discourse of such high estates were needful!"

"Most heavenly Blisse! may your poor toilsome worshipper hope for a few moments

of such audience, after all his pains?" said Henry with passionate ardour, and extending his hand. "I shall not else believe that I have appeased an anger which only mine extreme love hath moved, but which, perchance, without assurance, cannot fully be trusted in that true light."

"Come, sir, I will lead you to a bower at whose entrance standeth a little god with his finger on his lips!" said Wolsey, taking a candelabrum of coral and silver from one of the attendants. Anne flashed a lightning glance of the most withering scorn and indignation upon him, and then replied. "Well, my good lord, lead whither ye please—so holy a guide cannot surely lead to ill! Meanwhile, do ye all make ready to resume your feast, for his highness's good pleasure may be soon expressed, and I trust my answer shall not be of the longest!"

"Truly; but bring in fresh meats, master comptroller!—for we have none here worthy of such costly palates, whose sweet breath assures us they have but lately fed on ambrosia!" said Wolsey, stepping with great alacrity before the king and Anne Boleyn, who had now linked arms. He then led the way out of the gallery, through the door of the oratory which had already figured in the disastrous story of Rood-

spere's love, into an apartment of his private suite fitted up for the occasion. After ushering the king and Mistress Anne into this retirement, Wolsey made his reappearance hastily in the corridor, and then for the first time became aware that Raphael Roodspere had taken upon him to follow in the wake of his patroness and her accompaniers thus far.

Wolsey was certainly not unaware of the degradation and baseness of the office he had undertaken, and his countenance, at this moment, now that he was relieved from the necessity of dissimulation, glowed with shame, resentment, and angry passions of various kinds. Up to this moment, though all along evidently and painfully impressed with the fact of his presence, he had taken no notice whatever of Roodspere, and had carefully shunned encountering his looks, as if they were laden with thwarting and misfortune. But now he seemed to lose patience, and for the first time addressed him, and with extreme asperity. "What do ye here, sir, eavesdropping and espying, now as ever, and intruding yourself on the very privacy of the king's highness himself!"

"The Lady Anne desired me to keep well of her company, whatever befel—and, my good lord, I fear me, not without cause!—

Wherefore I abide, and will abide, her pleasure here!" replied Roodspere, with stern serenity. "Meanwhile, since it is my hap at last to find myself in the constantly denied presence of your grace, I will take the season to demand of you wherefore you have broken your plighted faith to me, and suffered the villanous prior to ensnare my wife within his evil meshes?"

"I will answer your question then now as plainly as ye can desire; but let us hence, lest we interrupt more musical discourse!" returned Wolsey, with anxiety.

"Not a step, not a hair's breadth, will I past hence until my lady and mistress commands me!" said Roodspere. "Your grace may choose whether you will answer me, or no, even where we stand!"

"I *will* answer thee then, true son of thy peevish and altogether unsensed mother!" replied Wolsey, yielding to a burst in his pent-up passions. "Never dream that Wolsey will aid thee and thy pernicious sect further in their plans to destroy the foundations of the church, whose triple-crowned summit himself, by destiny, shall be! Never believe that I will awaken again our Lady's scarcely appeased wrath, by tearing her son's bride from his divine arms, to give into those of a heretic

blasphemer!—and make mine own self the scandal of all churchmen, wherever the tidings shall be borne on the winds of the world! Let her tarry where she is, and, in due course, be canonized by the name and style of Sancta Simplicitas! For you, Master Roodspere, you have preferred this haughty lady's favour to mine—and wisely, perchance, for a brief season. But the tree lasts—the flower fades! Meanwhile she is more of thy speckles than the white Paulet nun, and, caged and roosted as we learn ye are ever together, I see not wherefore ye may not console yourself in time, for the eternal loss which as far as in my power lies—and it is seconded by a vigilant keeper's care—I swear ye have made of this forbidden game!"

As the Cardinal spoke thus, Anne's voice, uttering in raised tones what seemed to be words of indignant expostulation, came to the hearing of the interlocutors in the corridor. The purport could not be plainly distinguished, but Henry replied, as his experienced minister felt, with an earnestness, a vehemence, and yet a submission and respect completely different from his usually imperious style of love-making. The dialogue continued for some time, in a singular variety and fluctuation of tones—on one side, in all the moods

of entreaty and amorous persuasion, lavish promises, jealous upbraidings, even menaces and stormy objurgations—on the other, in those of disdain and refusal, of scornful negation to those reproaches, of defiance, and challenge almost to the powerful pleader's denunciations! Finally Anne's voice seemed to gain completely the ascendancy, and ran on for some minutes in what appeared to be an harangue delivered in some rich and eloquent music. Suddenly the door of the retiring-room flew open, and she called Roodspere by his name. So far, both listeners, swayed by the same momentous curiosity, had, as it were, tolerated one another's unlicensed overhearing. And now, both alike forgetful how such a close attendance might be looked upon, urged by the same irresistible impulse, made their way into the chamber.

An unexpected sight presented itself. The king was rising with the slow and sullen look of a baffled suitor, from his knees, while Anne stood before him in an attitude of supremacy and rebuke well befitting the regal and haughty style of her beauty, and which was wonderfully enhanced by the glow of passion and disdain that lighted it up. The floor at her feet was strewed with fragments of written vellum, and a casket of

jewels of the most splendid lustre and setting was scattered all over the gilded rushes on the boards.

"I summoned you, master chaplain, to bear witness that I am no longer dishonoured by the possession of these baubles! I have restored them to their owner!" said Anne, as Roodspere entered. "These shreds, sire, engrossed in my lord cardinal's own hand!—are all that remains of the patent that made my father a viscount-peer!—They are mixed, I fear me, beyond resorting, with his liberal grant of a thousand pounds a-year, on his palatine bishopric of Durham, *during your Majesty's gracious pleasure!*—I trust this glittering glass is not so injured in returning that a lapidary's skill is needed to fit it for some worthier lady's acceptance! And for my invitation to call myself mistress of York Place, until I can be provided with as stately a mansion, at your grace's charge—I humbly think it cannot well be, inasmuch as York Place so far exceeds your own royal habitation, in all kingly pomp and furniture, as to make it too visibly *only* a promise! Therefore I will return, with what speed I may, to mine own honest dwelling, which I yet desire not to change for all this pomp! And as I have named to you conditions from which I will never depart—and your grace declares

they are impossible—I take my leave, in all humbleness of duty, now and for ever, purposing to join my father on his embassy! It suits not with mine honour to make a longer absence now from the company; and therefore, master chaplain, as you guided me hither, guide me hence!" And with a profound abaisance to the astonished and perplexed king, Anne took her chaplain's arm, and glided from his presence.

"What is the matter, madam? What hath chanced?" said Roodspere, with the most intense anxiety.

"Nothing! The king and I have only differed in a letter! He would have me for his queen—and I have told him he shall only have me for his queen!—Dost thou mark, brother Raphael? Have we not split upon a very hair?"

Anne Boleyn's return, attended only by her chaplain, excited universal wonder. But she herself seemed to continue perfectly composed and disengaged of all troublesome thought. She even took a lute from Mark Smeaton, and with perfect carelessness, and with even more than her characteristic gaiety, accompanied herself in a lively French rondeau. The return of the king and of his minister was meanwhile expected with the greatest curiosity by the as-

semblage, who knew not what to think or conjecture. Nevertheless a considerable time elapsed before they appeared—and when they arrived, opinion was yet more puzzled to divine the meaning of the beaming countenance, elate and confident step, of Henry, in contrast with the chafed and distracted looks of the cardinal, and his reluctant, staggering movement. All attention was concentrated on the rejunction of Henry with Anne Boleyn; but only Roodspere, who was beside her, heard him whisper the impassioned words, "I come then, dearest and most virtuous lady and love of mine! to plight my eternal faith in betrothal of marriage to thee, calling God to witness that as soon as I am master of myself wholly, I will be wholly and only thine, and by a husband's most sacred name!"

Anne took the offered hand, essayed to speak—but on a sudden she grew deadly pale, and swooning away in Roodspere's support, while Henry in vain extended his jewelled hands to catch her sinking form; the vision of the chapel of St. Blaize became an optical reality! Wolsey, anxious to avoid any committing scene, took advantage of this incident to desire the company to follow his officers into the banqueting chamber, where the real feast was prepared, so as to leave the exhausted

lady a freer air. No one dared to hesitate in obedience, so that when Anne revived from her faintness, the gallery was deserted of all but herself, the king, Wolsey, and Roodspere.

"Cardinal!" then said Henry, in his most austere tones of command. "Vex me no more with your crossings and importunity! We are fixed! Yourself have convinced me of the unlawfulness of my coupling with my brother's wife, which I hold henceforth invalid and dissolved; and require of you now your benediction on my betrothal to this lady—the most virtuous, as well as the most beautiful She, in all this world, and to bear witness to what now I swear, by all the oaths ever king did plight, to make her my queen and wife when you have accomplished my divorce from Arthur's unblest and forbidden couch! Until when I promise to regard her only with such awful love as might indeed befit a pilgrim to the lady on the shrine he sought!"

Wolsey stared aghast as one who should behold the fabric of the world giving way and reeling around him; and so vivid was the painting of his intense agitation and astonishment on his visage, that Anne burst into a wild, hysterical peal of laughter, that seemed to concentrate every essence of derision, hatred, and triumph! The consciousness of his danger

rushed upon Wolsey, and losing all self-command, he could scarcely articulate the words: "But, sire!—the treaty with France!—the Duchess of Alençon!"

"I rend it to pieces rather than that mine own heart should be so rent! I discharge the duchess from my thoughts, as your mistress here has promised to discard your tearful runing-boy, the Percy! And whoso shall gainsay our loves, I will answer for them against the world in arms!"

"My liege, but this is madness!" said Wolsey, casting himself on his knees before the king; "I am your poorest bedesman and servant, the most bounden that ever subject was to a king! But yet I cannot—and I will not—dethrone the daughter of the Spanish kings, and aunt of the empire, to make a mercer's heretic granddaughter queen in her place!"

It is scarcely possible to imagine the fury that transported Anne at these words. "Ha, worthy churchman and priest-cardinal of Rome! as who should say, worthy wolf of a devouring pack! dost thou find it more against the grain to make a wife than a harlot for your king?"

"Your highness hears! I cannot be of a conspiracy to make mine enemy—and the enemy of the church—my sovereign, and mate

of the Defender of the Faith!" exclaimed Wolsey.

"Good sooth, cardinal! deem ye we are to be led by the nose in doctrine by a wife, like Adam of old?" returned Henry, vehemently. "Moreover, thou liest!—and it was ever a trick of churchcraft to accuse those of heresies who were dangerous in the way of the priests' power and dominion! And what sayest thou of the Boleyn descent? Is not mine the breath that creates nobility?—From this moment her father is Earl of Wiltshire, and herself Marchioness of Pembroke! Wilt thou gainsay this, sir cardinal-king! for we know what the people call thee! I tell thee, Wolsey, we will mate with no widows, and will have this lady for our wife, or none!"

"My liege! it shames me to see your ripe wisdom so grossly abused! Ask in France, of the jovial king himself, what manner of fame this lady hath there, in Paris, who is so chary of her kindness to your grace! But it is no marvel!—it is no marvel!" he concluded, yielding to the delirium of his disappointment and fears. "This is all a devised show—an acted seeming—to drive you on such a madness as never yet king of ripened age and capacity hath dreamed! Question this hireling fellow, this lingering espial—and he will confess—he

dares not deny—they have plotted this between them, to make the wisest king their fool! *As if it were so difficult to be virtuous with so goodly a chaplain to keep one so!*"

Henry glared round at Roodspere with an instantaneous lightening up of his eyeballs, that evinced how suddenly and vividly his dangerous passions might be stirred, even by so reckless and shameless a blast of suspicion. But at the instant Anne threw herself on his breast, exclaiming, "O, my knight! my Henry! my fearless champion! will you hear your wife-betrothed blasphemed thus without reply?"

"My only hope and love! I cannot answer a churchman's gibe with my lance, nor fitlier in any wise, to show mine utter scorn and disbelief of his calumnies, than now and thus!" returned Henry, fondly embracing her; and continuing in the thundering tones that struck terror even into those whose cause he asserted. "Look, cardinal, that thou spare of thy pains and diligence as little as before in speeding the course of our release from our sometime-imputed spouse, or look to lose the means of furtherance more suddenly than you have gradually grappled them into your greedy and all-grasping clutch! We have raised your greatness too high indeed since it shadows ourself at last! —but the builder can also destroy! Look to

it and delay no longer to pronounce a blessing where you have cursed, on our betrothal!"

"Nay, sire, so holy an office befits not a vile pandar's service in it! Let this young clergyman, worthy of the name, consecrate our plight!"

"Sir, I am but the mere creation of your will—I cannot but obey!" said Wolsey, rising dizzily. "I am ready to do your pleasure—to bless your betrothal to my Lady Marchioness—if your marriage with your queen cannot stand good, if—"

"*If!* when has it been *if* with you till now, my lord legate?" interrupted Anne. "But I see well you will make rare *if*-ing of it now, and heaven forbid I should receive your benediction in my matters! Sir, if you credit not this scandalous father's tongue, who rails so heinously at his own blood, let us take our blessing from Master Roodspere's hands."

"It shall be so!" said Henry, and to Roodspere's astonishment the haughty Tudor knelt before him, hand in hand with Anne Boleyn—and so continued, while with amazed but unfaltering tones, he pronounced a benediction on the contracted pair, and concluded with an effusion of thanksgiving, so eloquent and fervid, that Henry was much struck and pleased.

"I see well," he observed, with a grim smile

as he arose, "that the cardinal hath provided us aforetime with a theologian whose zeal will make ample amends for any remissness on his own part!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MONKCRAFT.

From the date of the memorable banquet recorded in the previous chapter, Wolsey's star, which had risen so rapidly to its apogee of brightness, declined with much greater rapidity. The indefatigable hatred of a woman, of great abilities, so bitterly wronged, worked incessantly in conjunction with that of the courtiers, the dissatisfaction of the people, and, last but certainly not least, the wonderful progress of the new ideas, to push him downward. The long struggle of the divorce began in deadly earnest, and speedily enlisted the entire nation into opposite camps, whose hostility, continually heightened by mutual injuries, and animated by the mightiest motive-power of the human mind, has been perpetuated in various forms to the present hour.

For a while Wolsey's intriguing policies contended with, by eluding, the strong current of events and opinions setting in. But the very subtlety and excess of his duplicity, finally brought him into a position, whence

extrication became impossible. While affecting to conciliate his brilliant enemy, by every mark of subserviency and devotion, he secretly coalesced with the opposite party; and there is historical support to the positive averment of the secret documents in our possession, that it was Wolsey himself who instructed the queen and her adherents in the vital secret of the intention to divorce her, and to raise Anne Boleyn to the throne in her place. It was afterwards undoubtedly ascertained that he carried on a confidential intercourse with her prime adviser and advocate, Prior Sancgraal of Westminster, at the very moment when he was supposed to be most earnestly engaged on the opposite interest. Katharine, already irritated in the highest degree by the discovery of the purpose to pronounce the invalidity of her marriage, was exasperated in every light as a woman, a princess, and a bigoted adherent of the old religion, by the revelation of her destined successor. The consequence was her rejection of the authority of the pretended court of adjudication, and her appeal to the pope. And then began the formidable crisis in Wolsey's destinies: would he admit or disallow of the appeal?

All readers of English history are aware of the affirmative decision that, after long waver-

ing, he arrived at, and which led to his immediate downfal and dismissal from the favour and confidence of Henry VIII. And again it was Raphael Roodspere's chance to throw the grain into the balance, that turned Wolsey's hesitations into resolve. In the course of the pleadings by which the queen supported her determination to appeal from the tribunal appointed to judge the cause, one of the most zealous and powerful of her ecclesiastical supporters, Prior Sancgraal, produced on her part copies of a bull alleged to have been issued by Julius II., granting a dispensation for the marriage, *all cause notwithstanding*. Neither of the cardinals legate, nor any of the king's advocates, ventured on so unorthodox a procedure as to question the papal power, even to this large extent. But Raphael Roodspere, one of the most distinguished doctors on the king's part, admitted to the deliberations by special command, loudly affirmed that the *pope could not dispense with the laws of God*, which, he avouched, declared the marriage of the king with his brother's widow unlawful. An affirmation that was indeed the very backbone of Luther's protest, but which, nevertheless, obtained the king's hearty applause and seconding! The ultramontane cardinal was then provoked into declaring that he sate

there by no other authority than that of the supreme pontificate, and if it was denied, he possessed none to proceed in the investigation. Wolsey's eyes were now thoroughly opened to the dangers that beset not only himself, but the church with which he was identified, in the success of Anne Boleyn's ambitious designs; a bigotry was roused in him into strenuous action which lurked in his character under all its worldliness and depravity. The superstitions in which he was educated reappeared like writings in sympathetic ink, under the heat of the tribulations that assailed him!

But the religious element entered hourly more energetically into the strife. The very necessity of her position, and her known inclinings, left little room to doubt that Anne's elevation would be destructive to the papal domination in England also. Her court, for so it might well now be designated, was crowded with suspected persons. Her most confidential friend and counsellor, Raphael Roodspere, had long been identified with the reforming movement, and was under a public accusation of heresy. It was evident that an occult but all-powerful protection favoured the efforts of the reformers. Everywhere they gained ground. Bilney wandered unmolestedly, diffusing their doctrines far and near; Latimer preached some

of their most dangerous and menacing tenets openly to the Londoners; Cranmer and Ridley ventured to place themselves at the head of a movement, which scarcely disguised its purposes any longer, in both Universities; Roodspere gained the most powerful and efficient proselytes in the court itself. Even Henry, though throughout by no means exhibiting any degree of personal liking to the young doctor of theology, listened occasionally with attention to his bold and innovating expositions.

Whatever other result might be, Wolsey arrived at last at the bitter and overpowering conviction that the great object of his ambition was for ever removed from his attainment! He had mortally offended the emperor—he had no longer a bribe to offer France. The conviction that it was impossible he could ever conciliate Anne's real confidence forced itself irresistibly upon him. Her hatred continued hourly to increase in fervour against him, with the progress of her painful triumph. It appeared unmistakably in every imaginable form. In vain did Wolsey, under cover of lending it to the king, resign his magnificent palace of York Place for her residence; heap the most flattering attentions, gifts, and honours, on herself and all of her alliance. She used her continu-

ally increasing influence with the king to vex and thwart him, with all the ingenuity of female malice and revenge. Under her patronage his enemies hourly increased in number and boldness. Complaints multiplied against his administration, and were now brought, with every advantage of exaggeration, to the king's ears. The legantine court was trammelled in all its proceedings by the authoritative interference of the courts of common law; and the cold and altered manner of Henry portended still more fearfully that the reign of his once all-potent favourite was drawing to a close.

The corrupt plans at first adopted by Wolsey produced and promised no success. Anne continued to be most circumspect in all her intercourse with her boisterous lover, and while exhausting the resources of her genius and beauty to multiply fascinations around him, kept him at a distance which, far from wearying, seemed to inflame his passion hourly to greater vehemence and impatience. Wolsey found it at last both useless and dangerous to protract the issue in this manner, and, with extreme reluctance, resumed preparations which had long hung in abeyance like sails on the yards when the wind that strained them suddenly subsides. His renewed activity almost

immediately produced the famous appeal that threw all the onus of the decision on himself and a colleague who was notoriously at his disposal. Compelled then to cast the fatal die, it was no marvel that when Wolsey irretrievably committed himself to the Catholic party, by admitting the appeal, and dissolving his court, his disgrace was confidently anticipated. But he himself, though he had made up his mind to a grievous clash in his fortunes, stood amazed at the sudden and overwhelming ruin into which they fell around him! The king set off, in extreme disgust, on a progress to one of his country seats, after issuing orders that stripped the cardinal of all his great offices and power in the state, without deigning to listen to any apologies or explanations from him—without even deigning to inform him of his intended departure.

It is true that Wolsey thus achieved the consolation, as he imagined, of effectually checkmating his adversary, and of rendering a legal union with her so impossible as almost to compel her to abandon her ambitious hopes. But he only knotted the causes whose solution was the Reformation! — In consenting to Anne Boleyn's acceptance of the king's passionate invitation, under the most solemn promises of security to her honour, to accom-

pany him to Grafton, Roodspere first propounded to her the vast idea of labouring at the separation of the English Church from the papacy, and of establishing its earthly supremacy in the king himself! This was the object to which Anne was now to turn her attention, and devote her persuasions to effect. But Roodspere himself was not to be permitted to share in the task; and for a reason that filled him with astonishment and dismay. Laughing and blushing at the same time to excess, Anne Boleyn avowed the king had made an express stipulation with her, that he should not be of their party; and from his whole manner and tone she was satisfied no less a passion than jealousy was aroused in the royal breast against him! With vivid indignation she declared that from the moment when Wolsey had uttered his flagitious insinuation regarding their intimacy, the idea had never been effectually dispelled in the king's mind, even by all Roodspere's zeal and services in the promotion of his cause!

Roodspere himself had always distinguished a degree of repugnance and repulse in Henry's manner to him, though occasionally betrayed into vehement approbation of his labours and learning during the debates on the divorce. He was aware that an adherent of his old

enemies, the monks, and a confidential ally of Prior Sancgraal's — the Duke of Norfolk, openly manifested dislike and suspicion against him, and might well be made the medium of stirring the royal apprehensions and vindictiveness. The affection and familiarity which a community of wrongs, purposes, and habitation, necessarily induced between him and his patroness, might well infuse misgivings into so jealous and distrustful a heart. A very slight reflection convinced him of the prudence of Anne's request; but on the other hand he was disturbed with the notion that it was possibly a contrivance of her enemies and the sycophants about the king's person to remove a person whom they rightfully regarded as one of the greatest obstacles to their nefarious hopes of inducing the compliance of Anne with her suitor's dishonourable wishes. But the lady—still laughing and still blushing more vehemently yet—invited him to supply his place, for awhile, with her by the presence of his tutor, Cranmer of Cambridge. The king had lent a ready ear to the suggestion of this latter learned ally, to make an appeal to the opinion of all the great universities of Europe, and himself desired to see a man who, to use his own phrase, "had got the right sow by the ear!" And when Roodspere eagerly as-

sented to the compromise, she added, with warmth and earnestness, "Why remove ye not the king's suspicions, by getting ye your own true love and wife out of the monks' bondage?—I will sue ye out your pardon, doubt ye not, for such an offence, and ye shall go abroad on this matter with the universities awhile, until Henry's foolish fancies dispel themselves!—How say you if ye fill up the leisure of this deadlock in our affairs by such an enterprise of a *preux chevalier?*—I shall relish no meat better than to inflict so great a vexation on this saucy-tongued prior, who preaches that 'Mistress Nan' is Antichrist in petticoats!"

Roodspere wanted no zeal for such an enterprise; but he was forced to confess that he had exhausted every effort even to obtain any tidings of his wife's condition, in vain. "Ay, truly," replied Anne, "I have myself, unknown to you, twice made attempt in person to learn some tidings of her; but they held themselves excused, and let me eat their strawberries grudgingly! Yet, take thou a golden key—my coffers are at your command—and try the nunnery gates again!"

The lull in the great contest, and the departure of the court, in fact afforded Roodspere a leisure which the absorbing vicissi-

tudes of action had hitherto denied, to devote some consideration to his private affairs. It may be thought that he had neglected no possible means of penetrating the mystery of his wife's fate, since she continued to be the inspiring motive in all his toils—the crowning object of all the perils he so fearlessly invoked around his path. But his clear integrity had not yet suggested to him any but direct and simple means to attain his purpose, and the thought of bribing infidelity, even to his remorseless adversaries, gave him the greatest repugnance. He determined to make one more open and undissembled attempt to obtain at least some information on the main points of his inquietude. He suddenly bethought himself of the deposed prioress, Dame Juliana Biocas. He remembered she had formerly exhibited even an exuberance of partiality to himself personally, and he thought she could have no reasonable motive to interest herself in behalf of the projects of persons who had contrived and effected her ruin. His absence as usual, in the train of the court, must have been anticipated — and finally he presented himself, with good hopes, at the convent gates, and with an inquiry for Dame Juliana.

Luckily the porter, though a lay-brother of Westminster, appeared not to recognise him;

and Sister Juliana, as she was now called, was fallen into such contempt and neglect, that a visitation to her seemed without consequence. Roodspere was accordingly admitted into a stone parlour, cold and narrow as a well, and lighted from the ceiling, where only, the rigour of the new prioress suffered any visitation to be made to her charge. But herself, as well as her household, appeared to be thoroughly thrown off their guard; and after a brief delay, the once jocund and well-conditioned ex-prioress entered upon the scene. What a change was there!—Roodspere could hardly believe that he recognised the goodly dame of his recollections in the person of a swollen-visaged beldame, clad in sackcloth, stripped of every ornament and decoration, who entered pattering over a rosary of common wooden beads. Little about her but had shared this extraordinary transmutation—excepting her eyes—which though considerably hollowed and bleared, retained something of their bold and unfeminine stare. To this had the canonical penances inflicted by the prior—the severity of the new prioress—the sweating sickness—and, of late, a copious indulgence in the great panacea of human cares which antiquity deified under the name of Bacchus—reduced Dame Juliana Brocas.

Roodspere received but a sullen and repulsive welcome from this lady; and he conjectured that, besides the old grudge of her slighted charms, she regarded him as in a measure the cause of her misfortunes. He endeavoured to dissipate this impression by the kindness and cordiality of his greetings, and by expressing his sorrow at the changed circumstances under which they met. But the ex-prioress seemed but slightly, if at all mollified, and abruptly desired to know his business with her, as there was a heavy penance for holding any unnecessary intercourse with a person suspected in the heinous offence of heresy. Roodspere was about to reply, as guardedly as possible, when the ex-prioress's name was suddenly called, in a screeching tone, which he recognised as Mother Barbara's. Dame Juliana was compelled by "holy obedience" to respond to this summons, and left the room, promising, if she was allowed, to return. For a considerable time it was doubtful whether she was not prohibited to confer this favour; but at last Dame Juliana did return and, with a very different look and manner. She seemed flushed as if she had just poured a libation; her eyes were rekindled, and her whole style was changed into one of feverish eagerness and activity. Rood-

spere, struck with these signs, hastened to introduce his topic without so much prefatial matter as he had at first deemed necessary.

But the reply!—We shall not attempt to do justice to Raphael Roodspere's feelings when the nun—not much grieved at the anguish she inflicted—informed him that his lost but still most passionately-beloved wife was within a few weeks of becoming the mother of an infant who would have the sacrilegious right of calling him father!—Her condition had not been discovered — so it was said—until some time after she had been affrighted and threatened into assuming the black veil; and, to conceal so monstrous a scandal from the eyes of the people, she had ever since continued, under the plea of ill-health—insanity even was reported!—in a gloomy chamber which none but those in the secret were permitted to enter. But Juliana averred she herself did not believe she was mad, though her manners were very strange. A settled and unalterable melancholy weighed on her spirits;—and, saving that she had either formed, or had had infused into her, a terrible notion that she was destined to give birth to some awful and indescribable monster, whose hideousness would compel the assistants instantly to destroy it—she seemed in general

perfectly resigned and tranquil. She had taken an unaccountable fancy to Dame Juliana herself, who was often ordered to keep her company on that account, and had therefore every opportunity to observe her demeanour. And in Dame Juliana's opinion—if ever she exhibited any marks of positive insanity—it was after the frequent visitations of her confessor, Prior Sancgraal, whose rigour to so young and misled a creature, appeared to the ex-prioress herself even more unreasonable and barbarous than her own uncalled-for penances and mortifications.

No, we will not attempt it!—we will not attempt in words to portray the prodigous tumult of emotions raised in Roodspere's breast by this revelation. Silence is the only eloquence in the presence of the marvels of nature and of the human mind! We will not attempt it. We will but chronicle results—the earnest frenzy with which, even to supplication on his knees, at her feet, Roodspere implored Dame Juliana to permit him, if it were only a minute's interview with his unhappy wife—a single instant's mingling of their tears! She told him—and probably with great truth—that what he asked was impossible! But after some audience of his entreaties, seconded by a liberal offer from Anne

Boleyn's coffers—a sudden thought seemed to strike her. She recalled, as it appeared, with some hesitation and shame—that she was acquainted with a private inlet to the Nunnery Close, and that her cell was situated next to a buttress from which in former days the Knight of St. John, whose fate had caused her so much unjust scandal, fell, and broke his neck. But he had missed his footing under the influence of wine; and if the sober clerk she addressed dared make the passage, at midnight, to her apartment, she would in the meanwhile inform Lily-Virgin of the purposed visit, and by inducing her to feign some restless wish to sleep in her chamber, bring about the desired interview. Half frantic with love and dread at his beloved's danger, Roodspere fell unguardedly into the snare; and, having received the most precise and definite instructions for his guidance the following night, he retired in a fever of expectation and alarm.

On the morning after this rash adventure was essayed, all places of public resort—the City of London and Abbey of Westminster in particular—resounded with one much varied, but still in the main agreeing, iteration of an extraordinary piece of news. It was reported, in the most contrary tones of triumph and regret, of incredulity and frothy-lipped assertion, that a man, universally known and es-

teemed for his learning, piety, and devote enthusiasm—a favourite adviser and chaplain of the glorious lady of the ascendant, who was now generally understood to play for no less a stake than the crown imperial of England!—the most determined champion of the new opinions, the purity of whose life and conversation seemed to reflect their lustre in the most splendid and engaging relief—was detected in an amour with a profligate nun of Clerkenwell, deposed for her numerous indecorums from her rank as superioress there! There could be no doubt of the facts of the case; the guilty clergyman was seized in her chamber, and she had openly confessed their mutual depravity! A great number of persons had seen Roodspere pass through London, strongly bound, with his feet tied under the belly of a miserable hackney, which conveyed him to confinement in Westminster. Not in the Gatehouse, it was reported, several prisoners having of late escaped thence by connivance; but in the abbey itself, in a lofty chamber called the Hermitage of St. Wulfin. It may be readily imagined what a satisfaction this news gave to one of the factions into which the metropolis, and indeed all England, were now divided—what a sorrow and astonishment it was to the other!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CAIN AND ABEL.

Roodspere had been punctual as the stroke of time itself to the hour assigned for his arrival in Clerkenwell; and at midnight, entering at a long disused postern, by a key with which Dame Juliana furnished him, he found himself within the high-walled circuit of Clerkenwell Close. This, as we have formerly mentioned, was a beautiful and richly cultivated garden and orchard, interspersed with pleasant walks and alleys of verdant umbrage. We know not why misfortune should so cruelly mock her victim, but Roodspere's heart beat quick only with happy anticipations, and scarcely a shadow of danger crossed the radiance of the hope that lured him on. Could he only see her—console her—assure her of his undying love—clasp her once more to his soul—even if all other possibility of reunion continued denied — there was no hazard he would not have challenged undismayed. But a still more inebriating hope danced in his veins—that he could prevail, by the eloquence of love, in winning Lily-Virgin to a flight from her

prison and falsely-imposed vows, and redeem the precious pledge of their affection at the same time from the cruel and criminal designs of his enemies. Juliana had hinted at the most nefarious projects, pretendedly formed to spare the church and the nunnery the scandal of beholding one of its vestals a mother! And thus it was that he overlooked all obstacles and reasonable apprehensions, and delivered himself into the hands of his enemies. He had scarcely climbed the buttress—which was almost as easy to ascend as a flight of steps—and entered Dame Juliana's cell—scarcely had time to wonder at the preparations for a repast he found there, and to discern by an open lantern that she was lying, as it seemed, sound asleep on the coverlet of her couch—when the door was burst open, and a throng of nuns and lay brothers of Westminster rushed into the chamber, with torches and tapers innumerable

Roodspere immediately perceived that he was betrayed, and at the next glance that his retreat by the window cut off. A visage he knew too well to be Prior Sancgraal's, glared in at the lattice, and numerous voices of his captors, starting from ambush, called to one another in the Close. Instantly after a dozen hands seized him as in the claws of

crabs of gigantic power, and he was overpowered, cast on the ground, and pinioned. Remonstrance, inquiry, threats were all in vain —and to put the consummation on his agony, a haggard figure, with streaming hair, and madness in its eyes, came shrieking into the apartment—shrieking his name! And it was Lily-Virgin, pursued by Barbara and other of the nuns, like a dove set after by a flight of black hawks! Lily-Virgin, who recognised him—and to whom, with his own ears, he heard himself denounced, by a yelling voice from the window, as the paramour of the treacherous ex-prioress! Lily-Virgin, who, to all his frantic denials and entreaties, returned only peals of delirious laughter—and who was forcibly dragged from his presence before he could satisfy himself she even understood that he declared himself innocent of the infamy laid to his charge.

It was little, after such a scene, to be led in the most ignominious manner, through the reviling of a mob, and the astonishment of the citizens of London, to imprisonment in the lofty Hermitage of St. Wulfin. As if unable to trust so valuable a prize in any other of his strongholds, it was thither that Sancgraal's satellites conveyed their captive. Sacristan Wenlock and Rogue-the-Rogue Solomon, who

had survived the sweating sickness, were appointed his jailers, and consigned him with every species of insult and mockery, to the custody of the prodigious height and isolation of the loft, and its massive doors. He was then left to his own reflections—on which it seemed not possible that a gleam of hope could descend! He perceived that he had fallen into a snare that must alienate from him every species of protection and succour. His enemies would be enabled to represent him in the light of a hypocritical wretch, abandoned to the most licentious passions; his friends and adherents would be alike indignant and ashamed at his apparent fall. Even his holy cause itself would suffer, in the popular conclusions, by the supposed discovery of his infamy! Henry's suspicions would be reinforced by so amazing a detection of his secret corruption—and his patroness could not venture to interfere in his behalf. Or if, yielding to the rash generosity of her nature, she should, only increased exasperation and suspicion on the king's part would be the probable result. Meanwhile his imagined infidelity, even more than the terrible fate that would probably remove him from all hopes of explanation on earth, might complete the ruin of Lily-Virgin's intellect, and the merciless designs of

his enemies. From the cardinal, and his still powerful faction, he had only to expect vindictive reprisals, or at best abandonment to his fate. And what that fate was purposed to be, from the hands of the implacable and relentless prior, now that he was placed thus helplessly in his trammels, admitted not of a doubt.

As to any possibility of escape, that was altogether out of calculation. There was no Dan Gloria now in the Abbey, to hazard existence on a cast to save him! There was only the reminiscence of her mysterious but probably dreadful doom, to heighten every anticipation of evil. But when he considered the furious passions excited in his adversaries, and their necessary anxiety to rid themselves of so formidable a foe as he had proved, he needed no vague suspicions and suggestions to enhance his danger in his own eyes. Secret assassination he no longer dreaded; it was evident his enemies had determined to make a public spectacle of his disgrace and humiliation. And if he could have known the measures adopted by Sancgraal on the very day of his capture, he would have been entirely satisfied that exposure was one of the main purposes of his atrocious revenge. Sancgraal himself proceeded with the news of what he had done to

Richmond, where the doomed minister had taken up his abode; and before he went he summoned Almoner Benson to his presence—deliberately informed him that he had long known his secret treachery and betrayal of the Abbey counsels to their adversaries—and was determined no longer to tolerate his abode in it. But not to deprive him altogether of resources, he gave him permission to go and curry favour with the king's mistress, and Master Roodspere's patroness, by informing her of his capture, and of the just retribution about to descend upon his crimes! Brother Quodvultdeus, almost beside himself with dread at this direct accusation, solemnly avouched his innocence, and declared he would never forsake so good a lord, and brethren so kind—and within an hour took a hurried departure for Grafton.

The prior gave orders to have everything in readiness for the captured heresiarch's trial on his return, and he even exchanged a short but expressive consultation with two of the lay brethren, whom he directed to go into St. John's Wood (it *was* a wood then!) and cut down a beech tree, of a convenient size to make a stake. But his business with the cardinal detained him longer than he had expected; and on his return to Westminster, certain

intelligence summoned him to Clerkenwell. An event happened there which also compelled him to prolong his stay—and when he returned to the Abbey, in the evening, he found a royal messenger, who brought him a strict command from the king, to proceed no further in the matter of the charges against the chaplain of the "Lady Marchioness," as Anne was now called, until the return of the court to London, when Henry himself declared that he would be present, agreeably to a former promise, to execute "indifferent justice" between the accused and the Abbey of Westminster.

Almoner Benson had evidently taken the prior more rapidly at his word than the latter had purposed. But Sancgraal well knew that he was himself in no favour at court. Throughout the proceedings in the divorce he was distinguished by his ability, eloquence, and vehement zeal, on the side of the queen. He was the acknowledged head of the entire monastic party which, by its paramount influence in the country, still counterpoised all the progress of the Reformers in the great towns; and, considered numerically, compelled the divorce to be looked upon as a highly unpopular measure. The phrase "indifferent justice" pleased him not; and the usurpation of ecclesiastical power by the king, which he

had nevertheless himself originally invoked, could not be supposed much to delight a man who had uniformly repugned even the papal delegation of the cardinal legate. Yet apparently Sancgraal submitted, contenting himself by writing a long justification of his proceedings, in reply, addressed to the king, setting forth the enormous crimes—the heresies and unbounded debaucheries—of the accused, and earnestly imploring his grace's immediate attention to a case which involved the well-being and honour of the entire Catholic Church. An answer was received to this application, appointing a day for the trial, and at an unexpectedly early date. The prior was at the same time instructed to furnish Roodspere with all the books, papers, and testimony that might be necessary to his defence; but to deny any personal access, or by letters, to the culprit, from the exterior. Sancgraal smiled darkly—and promised compliance.

The latter command was very literally obeyed. During the space of the three weeks Roodspere continued a prisoner in the Hermitage of St. Wulfin, he had neither speech nor intercourse with any human being. Rogue-the-Rogue, who brought him his food, and Walter Wenlock, who always attended as a guard and watcher, either out of their own

malignity, or by command, never opened their lips to the prisoner. His fare—which was of the coarsest kind—was handed to him in utter silence, and no questioning could extract any tidings of what was occurring in the external world. The only amusement afforded to his anxious thoughts in that solitude were of a melancholy and desponding character. Roodspere took no interest in the Prior's books, which rather excited his disgust and horror, for they were nearly all of a blasphemous magic or of obscene romance under sanctified forms—of anatomy and physics of a material and depressing order—or of the gloomiest and most sophistical and intricate theology. Still less did he take any delight in the machinery of superstitious devotion accumulated in the Hermitage, but on which the dust had long gathered, in the absorption of the political events which had compelled the saint to descend from his aërie into the bustle of the world. The only relief to his distressing thoughts, for a considerable period, was therefore to gaze from his arched pigeon-holes down into the church, and remark with satisfaction its comparative desertion and gloom. This bird's-eye view of the changeful drama of existence continually going on beneath his gaze, somewhat distracted the growing fixity

of thought which is one of the most terrible of the consequences of solitary imprisonment. But only the murmur of the chaunts and music in the Abbey Church ever ascended to that great height; and the monotony of Roodspere's physical condition, in contrast with the raging activity of his ideas, might well have produced that state of mind on which his enemies purposed to act, but for one providential circumstance. On a certain occasion Wenlock so far broke silence as to inform him he was ordered to furnish him with any books he might need for his defence on the charges of heresy, shortly to be promoted against him. He desired to know what he would have brought to him—probably expecting Roodspere would wish to consult those he had left in the Abbey. But the prisoner replied that he required the Bible only; and as he was immediately furnished with his own Hebrew and Greek edition, thenceforth he had no lack of occupation for his thoughts, whenever he could succeed in abstracting them from the tormenting recollections and fears that besieged his heart.

During this painful interval, Roodspere frequently either beheld, or imagined he beheld, Prior Sancgraal's gloomy shadow gliding through the aisles of the church below, seem-

ingly himself absorpt in long and fathomlessly sombre reveries. Sometimes, it seemed to him, that a pair of ravenous eyes glanced upwards at him—as if a vulture were impatient for its prey! The terrible thought occurred to him at last, that this man of devouring and insidiously violent passions—judging from his own murky and ungoverned sentiments—imagined that the excess of Roodspere's misfortunes, and the pressure of solitude, would drive him on some deed of nameless despair; perhaps on suicide! Already, if Dan Gloria's revelations could be depended upon, he had found the efficacy of spiritual terrors, and the awe of the dreadful doom in store for Roodspere also — he might well hope — would again do the executioner's work on a victim, and save him from all dread of counteraction! But if so, Sancgraal entirely mistook the character of his man, and of the exalted impulses that held sway in his bosom. The morning still found Roodspere in his cell; and not a mangled and disfigured corpse on the floor of the church! But of what avail is it to turn in the circle of a solitary prisoner's meditations? Let us pass on to the day when those of Roodspere were to be turned into action; when the brutal Wenlock, without the least preparation, informed him that his trial was to

take place that day, in the Chapterhouse, and commanded him to hold himself in readiness for his summons.

Roodspere made himself ready, not by consulting authorities, but by commending himself, heart and soul, in prayer, to the Maker and Lord alike of death and life. His jailers found him busied in preparing himself for the sufferings most probably awaiting him, in the perusal of the records of those of the great Exemplar and Founder of Christianity. Taking only the Great Book with him—without even inquiring whither he was to be led—Roodspere followed in a rapid descent of the pile into the church. He traversed it with the same outward indifference, though there was scarcely a stone, a pillar, or a monument, but was associated with some recollection in his mind. Above all, the remembrance of Dan Gloria, whom he had chiefly seen amidst these localities, revived with force in his imagination, and an unutterable emotion of compassion, mingled with gratitude for her fervid, though ill-regulated affection, and fearful conjectures of her fate, visited his heart. Thus thinking, he scarcely noticed the fact that he was being led to the Chapel of the Kings, until he found himself it it!

The first object he noticed then, and one

that restored Roodspere to the remembrance of his own immediate personal dangers, was Cardinal Wolsey, at prayers before the shrine of St. Edward, to which he had just offered both his massive silver pillars—emblems of his legatine and archiepiscopal dignities! Roodspere was startled, and somewhat moved, to observe the great change a few short months had made in his appearance. His usually spendid attire was neglected and almost sordid; he wore no ornaments; he seemed to have grown suddenly old; to have shrunk like the prophet's gourd in a glance! His hair was grey, his hues pallid and sallow as if with the wasting of a fever, and his eyes were reddened round the edges with the brine of tears. Anxiety, grief, and corroding passions of various kinds had worked all the lines in his visage, into the withered relief of the fibres in a dead leaf. He knelt slouchingly as if he had lost his physical strength; demoralized by mental suffering and calamity! Roodspere became even affected as he gazed upon this spectacle; and when the cardinal arose, and made a gesture to the attendants to leave them alone, the expression of bitter anguish that writhed over Wolsey's visage was very faithfully reflected in that of his unfortunate son.

"Well, sir! I see you are not altogether of

iron and brass! And to this have you reduced us, that now style ourself Miserrimus, from the high estate we held!" said Wolsey, with strong emotion. "But are you aware of your own part in our calamity, and how, like the strong man of Gaza, you have pulled as heavy a ruin on your own head, as on ours, your adversary and your sire? Know ye how it is about to chance with you? That you are about to be tried, by your most mortallest and envenomed enemies, on heresies so certainly proveable that they have already thought it meet to set up the stake in the Place of the Ordeal? Matters are so contrived, that to your few friends, you appear as a wretch unworthy to be saved; or, if the rash woman who cherishes you so unduly, continues to interfere in your behalf, she doth it but to the manifest increase of the king's suspicions and indignation against you! Howbeit, both are distant, engaged in pleasureable desports in Northamptonshire, and you are here in Westminster! The monks are in earnest, you cannot doubt, since, relying on their charters and bulls, they are about to proceed to judgment and execution on you, in spite—perchance in consequence—of the king's inhibition, and sent word that he will himself decide your doom! I cannot interfere on your behalf,

being already compelled to lay down my legatine office, remaining under the utter penalties of a *præmunire*, for having used the powers it conferred upon me in this realm! Hunne's law hath come against me at last, in very sooth! Thus am I on the very verge of ruin complete, and decay without remede, as well as yourself; but if you will listen to some reason, Master Roodspere!—For this sake only, that I shall propose—for the sake of the Church menaced also with dilapidation infinite, from the malice and hatred of the heretic woman you have planted in the king's bosom! The monks of Westminster, and their grisly prior, have consented to allow me to propose conditions of redemption to thee by which may we yet all be righted in our shattered barque, and make a glorious harbour still! Yea, all may yet be well with me again—and my name, instead of becoming the proverb of a mighty fall, may be quoted against fortune's instability, as one that grew in lustre and breadth even to the close!"

Roodspere looked at the cardinal inquiringly, but made no audible response.

"And certes, now ye cannot but discern your own plottings have come to a vain finality!" continued the prelate, with rising warmth. "I have made the dismal conjunction you

projected us, impossible! I have allowed of the queen's appeal to Rome, where is a pope clutched in the gauntlet of her nephew, the emperor—who, for his very life, never shall dare pronounce for a divorce! Moreover, Campeius is bearing home in his wallet letters from me exposing all the reality of the dangers and destruction awaiting the Church should the Lutheran Anne attain the supremacy she aims at!—And now that both the king must despair of any such hope as this mad degradation of the marriage—now that the jealous watch-dog is removed from about her!—and the woman herself, gay, reckless, enamoured of pleasure, is alone with so eager a lover—can we doubt that either his passion shall exhaust itself anon in satiety—or hopelessness?—Then shall dispossessed Wolsey regain all his old place and habitude in his king's affections—and shall but find him the more bitterly set against Clement, and the willinger to assist in the depository that shall leave St. Peter's chair vacant for his ascent!—Dost thou smile?—I tell thee it shall, it must be so!—True, Hopkins, that prophesied all thy doings, so promised me!—And then shalt thou, as my dearest son, inherit my hat, title, and all my vast possessions in this realm!—I swear it to thee!—Dost thou hear? It lies

in thy power to shun the most dreadful doom of fire and death—to achieve these mighty rewards — redeem thyself, the Church, thy natural sire—from utter destruction! — and wilt thou not?—Speak!"

"What would you have done to this great purpose?—But you have not named the only reward that could win me so much as to raise my hand, in all these behalfs!" replied Roodspere, with supernatural coldness.

"Nay, for that cannot be! — and thyself must now see it is impossible she can ever be thine!—Nay, and Our Lady must have aided the prior in his work, since on this very day this Lily-Virgin of thine is coming hither *to bear witness against thee!*" said Wolsey —and even the desperate politician averted his gaze from the young husband as he pronounced the words.

"Lily-Virgin!—my wife!—the mother of my unborn child!—to appear *against me!*" exclaimed Roodspere—and now indeed utterly aghast.

"Your child is born—and dead!—The detection of your shameless intrigue with Dame Juliana brought on the sudden and sorrowful deathbirth of a man-child—who breathed only to be denied the Church's baptism!" said Wolsey, hurrying in disordered speech over

the words. "I say not that this is well—but so it is! Why shouldst thou emperil all therefore for one paltry woman's sake, who, for a jealous pique, can assist to consign you to the stake?"

"You speak reasonably, my lord cardinal!—Well, what can I do to prevent such sacrilege as for flesh to rend its flesh?" returned Roodspere, after a long pause.

"Firstly, it will be necessary to confess allegations that must else be so proved!—to plead guilty to the monk's indictment of heresies," said Wolsey, speaking with visible slowness and hesitation. "And then, could the king be made thoroughly aware that this dazzling lady of his is a heretic to the very core,—which, by thy confession and implication, he might be made to believe,—such is his abhorrence of that detestable sect, whose Sampson hath so grossly traduced and insulted his majesty royal before the world, that—and well thou knowest she is one!—In brief, Roodspere, you have but to avouch the truth—to the king—and—and—in the manner I shall rehearse it—and all will be well again!—Pleading guilty as ye must—for disproof is impossible—to your own charges—even as is wontedly done by men repentant, in the like offences, ye should name Mistress Anne as

foremost among the accomplices, fautors, and secret agents of the detestable Saxon fellow, and of his most heinous heresies!—And, good son, in the confession and admission of what neither can you at all deny—your disorderly, though secret and hypocritical, demeanour with women—you must in a way—and as it were by obvious and certain inference—give plainly to be understood—what the circumstances of your close and else marvellous familiarity—your jealous vigilance over her—her disdain of a royal prince's wooings—and all other circumstance of opinion — most clearly, to every experienced judgment, needs not the confirmation of your confessing lips!—I trow you take my meaning well enough!—The king himself already misdoubts of the same—but that you know better than I can urge it!—All things will go to confirm the same!—Her renown in France was such that King Francis, who boasts he never sighed in vain, wore her colours for a year and a day!—Why, but as a mere girl, I do remember me, at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, she would run wits with the most reckless laugher among the French nobles!—And this discovery of thy proper turpitude—as thyself wert wont to style a harmless byplay of the soul!—and it is of the nature of jealousy to desire to

know the worst, at any price!—Therefore the king will freely pardon thee on thy full revelation of the facts!—And thou wilt do himself and the realm a better service than all his liegemen of thy degree for many a year!—For ye will give him the right to enforce his will, if it should hold further to so handled a prize—which I think the less likely that I had much ado to reason him out of his mislike to link himself with a royal and most honourable widowhood!—How say you, sir?—Why keep you this silence and contemplation?"

"I do beseech your grace, give me some pause! These words leave all pursuit of judgment breathlessly in arrear!" said Roodspere, and literally his chest heaved with the panting sighs of an exhausted follower. "Betray my most excellent and honourable patroness to ignominy!—myself to eternal shame and confusion!—become the crowning Judas of the world!—to save the church of which your grace would become the worthy head!"

"Jest not with us!—the penalties whereon you will refuse, are not jesting matters!" returned Wolsey, in excessive agitation. "The monks will not—Sancgraal dares not—abide your counter accusations before the

king! 'Tis therefore they proceed, disregarding his inhibition, at every risk, ere he returns to London! The delay that hath had place was merely that this Nanny's continued bleatings for you might stir him to worse wrath and suspicions—and make it possible for the Paulet nun to come and aid in your destruction!"

"Ay, indeed!" said Roodspere, and he paused in overwhelming thought for some instants. "And are these lawful means in the church from which, I thank my God! I stand excommunicate and cursed?"

"To a good end, we may swerve, with venial offence, at times, from the direct rule of right! Heaven itself, at seasons, brings about its purposes in strange fashions!—Rest content; I take upon myself the whole burden of what is done amiss, to cut that ulcer out of our mother's breast! Yea, I command thee to do as I have said—and this book thou huggest will tell thee, the punishment of a disobedient son, in the old law, was death!"

"Alas! poor man!—and to keep thy footing on these slippery hatches of the world, for a few brief instants, thou wilt cast thy deathless soul into the deeps?" said Roodspere.

"I will do anything—everything—to preserve the church, which myself have brought into this infinite jeopardy—and to ruin my haughty and insulting she-destroyer! I see now that it was a wise man's saying, a woman cannot forgive if she would!—And I have offended her where women are most keenly alive to offence—pricked into the ever-welling core which can neither be healed by ointment or searing-iron! And O, Roodspere, if thou dost value in aught thy father's love—if thou art thy fond mother's true issue, who loved him so—if thou wouldst win my gratitude—shun my malediction—thou wilt not deny me this help in mine extremity?"

Roodspere remained for some moments gazing at the cardinal, absolutely speechless and motionless.

"Well, my good lord!" he said, at last, with a profound sigh, "lead me where I may disburthen my soul of its weights, and make a true confession of the worst I know against this lady and myself!"

"Praise be to St. Edward!—he yields!" exclaimed Wolsey, embracing Roodspere, in a very unfounded ecstasy of joy. "Come hither, my lord prior!—make ready your court. The prisoner will make open and free confession of his malefactions!"

He rung a bell as he spoke, probably a preconcerted signal, for Sancgraal entered from the altar-place almost immediately after.

"All is ready in the Chapter-house, my lord cardinal!" he said, with something of incredulity and amazement in his harsh and husky tones. The deep livor of his complexion—his unlifted eyes—his mechanical gestures—on the other hand, betrayed no emotion, however slight.

"He has taken my lady, Queen Philippa's motto on her tomb yonder," said Wolsey, smiling anxiously—"'*Disce vivere!*'—learn to live, indeed!"

"Nay, sir, mine eye is upon Queen Eleanor's; but that is the same in true purport—'*Disce mori!*'—learn to die!" said Roodspere, pointing to this seemingly contrary inscription, with a look and gesture Wolsey never forgot.

"Let us lose no time, lest he relapse into his craziness!" he murmured to Sancgraal, and putting his hand on Roodspere's shoulder, he moved with him to the ambulatory door, where the jailers awaited the latter.

"I will follow, sir, the instant I have locked the shrine!—These are not times to trust its treasures to the custody of men's reverence only!" said the prior. "And this man, too!"

he muttered, as Roodspere left the chapel with the Cardinal. "Who now shall believe in the rhapsodies of these new believers either? Why, it is well; I grudge him not existence so dishonoured, so delivered over to remorse and shame! It were a poor revenge compared, to calcine his fine limbs to glowing dust! And he damneth himself with these lies, an his faith be true!—And unless he lives, I cannot fasten the vulture on his heart, too! Why this, I again say, is well! I know not why it should sadden me thus: a star has descended from the skies into the abyss!—What is that to me? Why sags my heart so in its bosom?—Did she not say it was thus with Ritter Sampson, and with herself, when their hour of doom drew nigh?—What should I fear?—What can be more silent than this silence?"

He listened with profound and dreadful attention for an instant, gazing at the shrine, while a dank dew, like the sweat on a dead man's brows, gathered over his own. Suddenly he started! "Is she not singing—singing like a caged bird?" he muttered, clammily. "And how is this?—Doth the shrine ooze again?—Nay, 'tis but the glimmering shadow of the silver pillars on the purple and crimson in the marbles of the floor!—I must

contend with these phantasies—they fool me too much!—Oh! when the dead themselves would abate of their tyranny, and rest, our foolish thoughts will not suffer it! Why, there is nothing so very strange in it, after all! Yonder lies Richard II. He was murdered! Thomas of Woodstock, on whose dust I stand, was murdered! Edmund of Langley was murdered, whose heart is in the shrine with her! The cardinal murdered Buckingham! What is one murder more or less in such a Golgotha? It was not very cruel either: I never heard her speak again!"

"Lord prior!" exclaimed a voice. "What is this you mutter of murders and fell deeds?" It was Father Gislebert, who had stood for some moments gazing, in horrified surprise, at his pupil.

"Now, as ever, playing the espial upon me! Have I not told you, old man, my schoolboy days are over?" exclaimed Sancgraal, with sudden ferocity both of look and tones.

"I have hasty business with you, lord prior!" returned the old man.

"Is it again to remonstrate against my bringing this criminal to his justice?" interrupted Sancgraal, with stern impatience. "If so, come with me to the Chapter-house, and

see an end put to your plaints at once and for ever!"

"Let me then warn ye, once and for ever, at what peril you proceed! I am resolved to prevent a madness so destructive—and I have sent the king such word of what ye purpose, that hourly I expect he will be here, in person, to adjudicate in the cause!" returned Father Gislebert. Sancgraal stared at him in utter amazement.

"See ye not—as I did—that your disobedience would else defeat the object for which I have toiled, on your behalf, so many years? Dost thou think the king is not sufficiently exasperate against you for your defeat of his divorce, but you must give a reasonable pretence for his wrath, in so audacious an act of defiance?" resumed Gislebert. "No, son!—ye may now be better employed than in bringing this man to a justice you are not appointed to inflict! I have this moment closed a pair of eyes wearied of a changing world; and the soul of Abbot Islip has departed to eternal peace!"

"*Requiescat!*" said Sancgraal, after a brief pause. "Well, old men cannot live for ever, and we must not intromit of our duties in our sorrows! We shall have time enough to mourn; and we have little, if your news be

true, to judge! Keep them a secret but an hour, dear father!—My election is assured and the king's word is plighted to my succession, whatever betide!"

"Tarry, Sancgraal!—for an instant—mayhap for the last time—listen to me!" resumed the treasurer, with extraordinary agitation. "Hear me, for I must at length speak out!—For thine own soul's sake, and for mine—if the taint of mortal sin be upon it—stretch not forth thy hand to the crozier of St. Wulfin, lest vengeance descend, and blast thee before men's eyes!"

"What mean you?" returned Sancgraal, with a shudder, but with defiance and scorn in his utterance.

"Hearken!" replied Gislebert, his palsied head shaking frightfully. "I have sought every house in the Sanctuary—have caused diligent search to be made on all sides, abroad and at home—I have questioned, prayed, fasted, essayed all means—to set my mind at rest regarding the fate of the chorister, Dan Gloria! But nowhere can I find him or learn of his tidings!"

"What of that?"

"I have remembered since that the shadow which glided in with you, on the day of the interdict, was *his*! I saw the gleam of the

scarlet in his robe!---What hast thou done with him? Again, I say, if a mortal sin be upon thy soul, stretch not thy hand to the sceptre of saints!"

"Dotard! dost thou deem it will paralyse like thine own coward sinews, when thou didst betray the liberties of the church before a lay tribunal?" returned Sancgraal, furious as a wild animal teased to rouse itself in its den.

"Ungrateful wretch!—it was my knowledge that thy guilt placed me there—not fear of any human chastisement!—that disarmed my spirit of its courage, and brought this quivering infirmity in judgment on me!" returned Gislebert.

"It is false!—thou makest favour with the court, and layest false accusations against me, because thou wouldst thyself inherit the abbacy!—wouldst cheat me of that also, after conspiring with my cruel stepmother to make me a miserable monk, and depriving me of my birthrights!" retorted the prior. "But rest assured, in turn, the brethren will not elect to such mastery so tyrannous a ruler as ever, unto all, thou hast shown thyself!"

"Is it false?—Whose robe was it then I found left in Hunne's dungeon? I know the tale thou tellest thereupon!—and Heaven grant it may be a true one!—Yea, and thou

hast been, if not, in expiation, to the Holy Sepulchre!—I believed the story once: but if thou hast destroyed this unhappy *woman*—for alas! thou seest I was never deceived in the truth of who the Italian, with the visage of Hunne's wife, truly was!—If thou hast done this deed of ruthless murther, which I fear, bring not down the lightnings upon us all, by daring to assume the dalmatica of St. Peter!"

"Go, and whatsoever they may be, repent thou of my offences!—For thou alone art guilty of them that made me, against nature, and my own heart and will, a monk of Westminster!—a deformed monk that should have been a stately baron and a knight!" returned Sancgraal, with inexpressible bitterness.

"Be no longer deceived, Sancgraal!—yet I refuse not, and cannot, my share in thy just chastisement!—Hadst thou inherited the Lord Bigod's estates and rank, thou hadst wronged a lawfuller heir!" returned Gislebert, with a strong effort. "Ask me not to dishonour thine unhappy mother's memory with the tale!—But, know, it was not the remorse and terror of the offence merely—though that were infinite!—brought her hither, to perish at the feet of St. Edward!—It was necessary to impute to fatigue and suffering, thine untimely

birth—and the plea was too sorrowfully verified to admit of doubt!—But tell me, thou pitiless man!—who but a father would have borne for thee what I have borne? The life-long imputation of a fearful crime!—all the sufferings thy mad career has inflicted!—the ceaseless toil that covered the traces of thy crimes, and mocked detection on their hideous prints?—All in the vain hope that at length thou wouldst have mercy, if not on me, upon thyself!—repent, and yet redeém the dreadful past by a reversal of its deeds!"

"What, and dost thou even deprive me of the apology of my wrongs!—of the glorious blood that I dreamed foamed in these narrow channels of the cloister, fitly, over restraint?" exclaimed the prior. "But it is false; it is false! Thou art colleagued with the dead usurper whom my malediction withered, to defame my mother's chaste memory!—But be it how it may, she was a Bohun and a Plantagenet!—I disavow thy pretended share in me, wretched vassal, monk!—My name is Liulph Bohun at least!—Do thy worst against me!—I defy and spit upon it!"

So saying, Prior Sancgraal left the Chapel of the Kings by one of the altar doors; and was hurriedly descending its steps when he perceived the north gate thrown widely open,

and a party, apparently of hunters, in suits of Lincoln green, attended by a considerable number of yeomen, armed with crossbows, came trampling, with their spurs jingling on the pavement, into the church. At first, in his agitation, he took no notice of the circumstance, or imagined they were persons who came to join in devotions before their day's sport. But a stentorian voice suddenly shouted his name—and, startling round, the prior recognised King Henry VIII!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE CHAPTER-HOUSE OF WESTMINSTER.

"So, my Lord Prior! as little looked as longed for—ha?" was Henry's exclamation, as he tossed a hawk on his wrist on that of the Duke of Suffolk. "What! ye are surely too proud of your late great victory, ye of the Benedictine order, to brave our commands so openly.—So we have taken the advantage of a long hunting bout to the southward to come and see them in person enforced!—What is ado among ye, forsooth, to-day?"

"Yonder comes one, my liege, will tell us with fewer roundabouts!" said the Duke of Suffolk, and Almoner Benson made his appearance from the cloisters.

"Truly, as Dan Eglamour brought word, my liege!---all is in readiness for the trial of Master Roodspere, in the Chapter-house!" said Brother Quodvultdeus, who had apparently returned in the king's train to the abbey.

"Lead thither! Stand not amazed, Lord Prior! I come to interrupt no justice, but to deal it with both hands to all deservers!" said the king, with a terrible frown at the amazed

superior. Sancgraal rallied, nevertheless, after the first shock was over. "Will it not please your grace to begin by paying your reverence to St. Edward?" he observed.

"In good faith, no! Since ever kneeling at his shrine gives you monks no more grace than we hear of you. Neither will we give you time to get some cozening show arranged! Lead on to the Chapter-house without a breath's delay!"

Sancgraal complied with the imperious mandate. There was, in fact, no help for it—and the now numerous assembly in the Chapter-house of Westminster was struck with as much dismay as if a thunderbolt had suddenly fallen among them, by the abrupt entrance of the king and of his retinue. Nearly all the monks were present, from various motives of curiosity, and to enjoy the confusion of their once dreaded visitor. Wolsey occupied the abbot's throne, apparently as judge of the court, with his secretaries, Gardiner and Cromwel, on either hand of him. The accused occupied a space formed by the junction of three tables in a triangle, having the Bible open before him, and seeming to await the commencement of the proceedings with perfect composure. The prisoner was, indeed, the only person present to whom the

king's arrival appeared a matter of satisfaction, and a glow of hopeful expectation, or of some kindred feeling, lighted up his fine visage for an instant. But Henry's frowning stare, as he passed, effectually rebuked the sentiment, and conveyed to Roodspere, without words, a full assurance of the success of his enemies in rousing the king's most insatiate and relentless passion against him. But the latter deigned to take little more notice of the cardinal himself. He made no response to the kneeling homage either of Wolsey or of the whole assembly, as soon as the royal presence was recognised; but brushing rudely by the prelate, he ascended the seat of judgment, and threw himself back in it, with a sigh of fatigue and wrath.

"So, are ye all here?—I would not any man should have it to say that, contrary to justice and right, he is condemned unheard!" he exclaimed, glowering fiercely over the groups of dark and crouchant figures, bending like a wood of pine before the north blast. "Sir monks, ye have given me rougher riding than any at the Battle of the Spurs, to be aforetime with ye! But I have little birds that whisper me of your doings, far and near. I am come now to keep my long-promised justice among ye, and manifest to the world

how falsely it is imputed to me, or mine, that we take part with heretics, or the like, any more than we will endure the sedition and insolences of such as call themselves, rather than us, Defenders of the True Faith, and would have the people and our lord the pope believe we are set on novelties and innovations, the better to hearten him against doing us right in our cause! And now, monks, let us hear what ye have to allege in the urging of heresies against this man here—Raphael Roodspere, or Rodsbere, we wot not well what is his name, though we know the man, certes, of old accustomance! Who is your spokesman, or to speak in your tongue, your prolocutor? Speak out these heresies, and as briefly as may be, for we have promised one, with whom we would keep faith, never to let two suns down without encounter with the same! Though, by our head! the chief power of the Lutherans is in the ill and disorderly lives led by the clergy before the people, whereof ye monks of Westminster, from all we hear, are the worst, spending your time and wealth in all manner of wickedness and abominations! Marie! if the chaste St. Edward knows as well as I do what passes among ye, it is no marvel he walks in unrest, as you would have it believed he doth!—

though we are far misshot if ye make him not leave his cerements at your own pleasures, to infect the people with evil notions, as if of an unsettled time and government!"

"Sir, I was named by my brethren to this office, and stand here to accuse Master Doctor Roodspere of having publicly and privately preached and taught to the people, the opinions of the wicked and detestable heretic, Martin Luther, and others, condemned by the church, and contrary to its express inhibitions!" said Sancgraal, who had now regained all his wonted selfmastery and possession.

"Well, be brief: to the charges without mouthing, man!"

"To begin then, sire! Your highness hath doubtlessly examined and perused the libellus of heresies we formerly handed into your noble majesty, appealing from the Lord Cardinal's jurisdiction?" said Sancgraal, studiously pausing and intently observing the king's countenance. It changed. "Tut, tut!—my lady marchioness would never suffer me to see it, saying it was a mere midden of your lies, ye monks! But stir it, howsoever it stinks, Lord Prior! We are here to do evenhanded justice, despite all recommending to the contrary!"

Sancgraal speedily showed that it was not

for want of other preparation he refreshed the king's memory with the demand relating to his former accusation. He produced a long parchment, signed by the canons and other principal brethren of Westminster. "Here are our articles and allegations—whereon we will produce proof which shall silence all cavilling even of this man's most loving and obstinate abettors!" resumed he; and receiving an impatient signal from Henry, he proceeded to read the charges in the most strenuous tones of his powerful voice.

No English Reformer had ever as yet been called upon, in his single person, to answer so many accumulated forms of accusation. As yet, the battle was a desultory conflict over a wide plain, where a thousand separate positions were assaulted and maintained. But the advanced maturity of his opinions, or the malice of his enemies seemed of a sudden to have concentrated all the scattered elements of hostility against Roodspere, and to rage around him as around the Hougoumont of the great physical contest. And, as according to the maxim of the canon law, and the codes founded upon its principles, the criminal is his own best accuser, Roodspere was called upon to answer, at once, and in the series assigned by his prosecutor, to the

charges brought against him. And now even the crafty cardinal and his fellow-plotters, who imagined they had gained him over to their purposes, grew alarmed and astonished at the unflinching candour with which he admitted a succession of accusations, involving nearly all of them some perilous dogma, whose impugning was manifest heresy. But Henry's surprise gradually heightened into amazement, and his eyebrows arched upwards until they almost shifted, like the building around, from the Roman semicircle into the pointed Gothic! And not only his astonishment, but evident vexation and perplexity, increased with every word, and though he fell readily into Suffolk's whispered suggestion, that these admissions were preliminary to a humble recantation and imploral of his grace's mercy, the explanation appeared in no wise to content him.

The charges and responses proceeded on thus smoothly for some time. Roodspere admitted that while a student at Cambridge, he had been a pupil, consorter, and earnest admirer of Bilney. He denied not that the chief persons of his acquaintance in that University were under suspicion of favouring the new doctrines, and that he had himself been twice publicly reprimanded by the master of Jesus, for preaching against monachism, and asserting that the

monks were a set of drones and wasps, who lived upon the honey of the people, and starved their souls of spiritual food; also likening them unto the plague of frogs under Pharoah in Egypt. With a smile that would have been contemptuous but for its predominant expression of melancholy resolve, he allowed he had frequently declared he did not consider Luther a damnable and detestable heretic, or believe that he was engaged in a conspiracy to overthrow all the kingdoms of the earth, after the plan of the rebellious peasants of Germany, calling themselves Anabaptists, who desired to make all things in common. He admitted, without hesitation, he had avouched, in contradiction to an observation of Father Nicholas of Cologne, in full school, that Martin was deeply learned both in the letter and spirit of the gospel. He admitted he had read all the Latin books published by the heresiarch, and as many of those of his companions and disciples as he could obtain. The promotor then challenged him to deny that he had written certain annotations on, and in, the book, entitled *De Captivate Babylonica*, which the king's majesty's inspired wisdom had so utterly refuted---handing a copy of the work over to the prisoner.

"As full of damnable errors as an egg of

meat!" exclaimed the royal theologian, testily. "But I came not hither to hear mine own praises painted forth on such otherwise ill-limnings as I know ye monks make of me to the people!"

Roodspere immediately recognised one of the books which he had left in his chamber on his flight; but he knew he had penned no annotations on so forbidden a text, and accordingly he denied that those with which the margins of the copy in question were scored, were of his writing.

"Nay, you employed those whom you would corrupt on such services!—Your Dan Eglamour will prove, if need be, he wrote these comments on your dictation!" said Sancgraal.

"I am sorry for him an he doth! But surely it is not so, brother?" said Roodspere, turning to the young monk, who instantly burst into tears, but made no reply.

"Give me the book!" said Henry, snatching it with the sudden claw of a lion. "My lady marchioness will believe, belike, what she shall see!"

"On superior license, sir, it were lawful to read and annotate on these heretical works—or how should they be refuted?" Wolsey now for the first time ventured timidly to remark.

He had seated himself, with great lowliness, at the foot of Henry's dais.

"How! and to preach all manner of sedition and heresy under the guise!—moreover jeering at us and our reasonings at every turn, and quoting Martin's grossest insolence against us! For which, if Frederick of Saxony were a true prince, he would break him alive on the wheel!—Say ye so, Cardinal? But we hear, indeed, ye also do now make a show to appeal to the people from us!" said Henry, in so terrible and severe a tone that the cardinal held his peace for a long time after.

The promoter resumed his charges. He declared that the accused was in the constant habit of deriding and scoffing at the miracles of the saints, saying they were all either foolish tales, invented to amuse the gaping multitude, or false inventions, crafts, and deceptions of the devil, to dazzle the wonder of the commonalty, and induce them into a pagan pantheism like unto the worship of the ancient terrestrial gods and demons! That he maintained that, in their customary honour and adoration, we give to the creature what is due only to the Creator, and do what in us lies to deprive the miracles of our Lord and of the prophets aforetime, of their rightful cre-

dibility and veneration! That he had evinced these opinions by jesting and despising at their holy founder, St. Edward, marvelling that men should be deified for putting stone on mortar, and calling him a bad son, husband, and king! And by two distinct acts of wanton and outrageous sacrilege, in casting down a statue of our Lady from her altar, and tearing in pieces the hallowed veil of St. Veronica which she wore.

To this charge the accused replied by admitting that he had no respect for the character or actions of St. Edward; and that when he came to his defence he would explain the circumstances of the alleged sacrilege.

The prior resumed his charges by asserting that the accused denied the efficacy of pilgrimages, even to the Holy Shrine!—That he professed to hold the church's doctrine of confession, penance, and absolution, to be but an invention of priests, to the increasing of their own power, dominion, and profit. That no penance of the body can purge the soul of its guilt; that holy confession is an obscene prying into the secrets of the human soul; and absolution, pronounced by human lips, a delusion and a fraud!

Roodspere replied, with a glance that, steeled as he was, shook the prior's soul within, by

demanding to know what proof he could adduce on these charges? But Friar Gildas came to the rescue, bawling out. "Yea, sir, concerning the pilgrimages—ye wot well ye forbade Mugworth's wife, poor woman that was—ay, and a goodly one as ever buckled on shoeleather—to go on a pilgrimage to Willesden, through the green fields, to our Lady's chapel there—saying it was fitter, forsooth, she should obey her husband than her spiritual director!"

"Peace, knave!—we are not cockfighting now!" said Henry, imperiously. "I doubt not, in this, Master Roodspere had some reason, an thou wert the spiritual man advising—for, certes, thou art hugeously more of the flesh!"

"Our chief testimony in this matter—as plainly, by the boldness of the challenge, your grace may discern—hath been, I confess, craftily spirited away and withdrawn, by Master Doctor himself!—a corrupt Italian, whom he made his constant favourite and companion—for what *good* reason, I know not," said Sancgraal.

"I will speak of that anon also!—Meanwhile I deny not these charges as they stand—and methinks when I tell my tale I shall show cause enough why I liked not of these mortal

confessionings and absolutions!" replied Roodspere.

"That he repugneth the authority of the church, and of her most approved doctors, a multitude can witness who have attended his lectures in the cloisters," resumed the promoter, unfalteringly. "He asserts, indeed, that the Scriptures only, and men's consciences, are of authority!—And he gainsays the decrees of the church against the vulgar perusal of the Holy Scripture, averring that all men have a right to read, and form their own judgment, on all matters of faith!—Saying that the most ignorant of the people are as competent to pronounce on the same, as the noblest doctors—even as light, to the eyes of simple and wise, is alike light!—Your grace's own royal person can witness that, in a solemn presence, he denied the power of the keys, and the supremacy of our father the pope!"

Henry frowned; but it was perhaps doubtful whether his indignation was directed on the accused, or the accuser, in this instance. He looked at neither.

"I confess this article, wholly, and without exception of a word!—And, if I live not to see the day, still I hope some present will, when it shall be held the only doctrine!" said Roodspere, with warmth.

"A pretty hodgepodge ye would make of all doctrine, in time, then, Master Roodspere!—We shall have as many religions as there be men of fantastic musings in the land!—And for the pope—for a living body to be without a head!—man, it were a prodigy!" exclaimed the king.

"Your grace is head of the temporalty—what hinders but that you should also be head of the spiritualty, of your realm!" returned the reformer.

"Tut, tut, I am no priest, Master Doctor!—I have not the gift, which also, I fear me, fails the most in you, to pretend to such ministration!" returned the king, with a resumption of irefulness in his whole manner.

The prior proceeded in his accumulating charges. He averred that Roodspere had frequently, and before numerous companies, impugned the doctrine of purgatory, by affirming that the prayers and penances of pious men were of no service in obtaining remission for the sins of others. That he had affirmed the wealth of their own monastery would be much better bestowed in founding a goodly college for the diffusion of the New Learning, which the promoter characterised as the very wings and claws of Luther's apostacy! On

one occasion he had attempted to convince the treasurer of the Abbey that a certain penitential exercise he was accustomed to make, on behalf of a deceased lady, his patroness, was utterly in vain! He had purposely absented himself from the great mass on the anniversary of their late most noble prince and benefactor, King Henry VII., asserting that prayers and oblations were of no advantage to the dead! And so, by consequence, that houses of religion were altogether founded in error, and that the saints departed have no power to aid us! That he constantly affirmed the life monastic was in nowise a preparation, or porch, unto eternal salvation and happiness, but an unnatural and absurd condition of bondage and misery! That faith in Christ was the only means of salvation, and the good works of men thereto of no avail, being but its necessary fruit and harvest, as ye gather figs and grapes from the figtree and the vine! And that in consequence of the open preaching of these doctrines, he had corrupted many to desire to leave the habit and rule of their order, and divers novices to refuse to take upon them its obligations.

Roodspere admitted this article without comment.

The promoter continued, but without lay-

ing so much stress as Roodspere at first thought he would have done, by urging against him that he denied celibacy was necessary to be observed by the priesthood, or enjoined by any lawful authority, thereby repudiating all the canonical decrees and regulations of the church on the subject. Also, for the eschewing of temptations and scandal, that he had asserted it would be well if at least all those abroad in the world should marry; especially those subject to the society of women, knowing, *by his own experience*, how full of venomous danger such frequentation was! Henry gave a frown like night; but the accused candidly and calmly admitted the charge, giving a calm smile when Sancgraal added he had found the doctrine in Luther's book, "De Christianâ Vitâ," inasmuch as the copy he possessed flew open, of its own accord, at the chapter denying the necessity and holiness of the celibiacal life!

But all these accusations appeared to lose their proportions, and shrink into slight dimensions, in comparison with the charge which the promoter now brought forward as the crown and summit of all. He asserted that the accused was tainted with heresy in the supreme mystery of the altar—that he denied the Real Presence in the Sacrament! Rood-

spere had never been so desperate, or imagined the times so ripe, as openly to assert, among his enemies, his disbelief in the dogma of transubstantiation. But the subtle prior declared that he could prove his charge, by inference, inasmuch as the accused had always in his demeanour manifested that he considered no adoration due to the blessed elements, neither before nor after consecration, which, if he admitted the Deity to be present in them he could not have refused. At the elevation, it had always been observed, he continued upright, and never, on any occasion, bent his stubborn knees in acknowledgment of the divine presence! The Cardinal himself, with all his anxiety to behold heretical doctrines brought home to the chaplain of Anne Boleyn, shuddered and crossed himself at what he probably esteemed so surpassing and blasphemous an imputation. He even perceptibly shook his head, and gazed with warning emphasis at the accused. But to the surprise of the promoter himself, the startled horror of the king, and the evident consternation of Wolsey, Roodspere now, in plain and direct terms, acknowledged that he refused and denied the popish doctrine of transubstantiation, and could and would, if allowed the time, refute it, by authority of the Scripture

—whose decision only he received for full and conclusive in the question!

"Softly, Master Doctor!" Wolsey could not help exclaiming, "You plunge your pitcher in too deeply, surely; and can but bring up sand and stones for your own drink!"

"What needs, my gracious liege, after this confession, that I should urge further proof against this man? His own tongue is as a bare-edged sword of judgment against him!" said Sancgraal, dubiously; himself astonished at the easiness of his own victory.

"It is a two-edged sword of judgment, lord prior, if I may be allowed to speak in mine own behalf!" said Roodspere, with a sedate menace in his tones that struck even the bold and relentless accuser with an internal misgiving and dismay.

"He may recant his errors!—doubtless purposes so; and the greater the sinner, yourself know, my lord prior, the greater the saint!" Cromwel ventured to observe; and the king nodded, snapped his fingers, and gave a short, stern laugh, as if not displeased with the insinuation. "Dan prior, have ye done?" he then inquired,

"Nay, sir; for as the tree is known by the fruit, I would let your grace more clearly understand, by this man's deeds, his doctrines,

and how fully by these is proved that their pretended new alleged liberty of the gospel is but an unbounded license to wantonness, and infinite depravity in the indulgence of every passion of evil!" resumed Sancgraal, with a rekindling of the most deadly malice in his turbid looks. "And first, as to his altogether amazing and wonderful, though most secret and hyprocritical licentiousness in the regard of women! But that so many of his co-revellers perished, by the just judgment of God, in the late plague—such as my sometime brother, as I must grievingly remember he was, the Lord Bigod!—such as the Italian he hath stolen away, whom for his rare sensual gifts he made the chosen companion of his disports and debaucheries.—I could relate of his doings in the Sanctuary what would make the blood spurt from Christian ears to hear! Nay, truly, the most inordinate luxury of Roman or Assyrian record, surely never equalled what can be proven on this man!—for even pagans and devil-worshippers held the dedicated vestals of their gods sacred! Edgar, who built our abbey first, to expiate his offence, robbed the altars only of one nun! But this man—this priest—this confessor—rather this devilish incubus!—first corrupted to his vile will the miserable woman

with whom he was detected of late—once prioress of Clerkenwell, and worthily therefore by us, though in too gentle a secrecy, perchance, discharged from that office!—A woman already of ill renown, I grant!—But not satisfied with this turpitude, he also abused of the sacred power and solitude of the confessional, to win to his shameful lusts an orphan girl, of noble and knightly parentage!—moreover, a ward under your grace's protection in your Court of Chancery!—and who, not many weeks agone, to all our infinite scandal, gave birth to a prodigy which, praised be all the saints, who doubtless interposed!—perished as it drew the breath of its unhallowed existence."

During this diatribe Henry's visage had gradually darkened deeper and deeper, until a thundercloud, fraught with destruction, appeared to rest on his brows. "And did my lady marchioness never let mine ears rest, pleading for this man! But *noscitur à sociis*, is for once a lying proverb! Fie, what a monstrous fellow is this, that hath an appetite like the great sea's, to devour all that margins it!"

"But, gracious prince! of all this charge I am as innocent as that sweet bud of purity, if it be true their hellish breath has blasted

it!" said Roodspere, for the first time throughout the examination, roused to a display of emotion, and of the most vehement kind. "And forasmuch as I have confessed, without blenching, what consigns men, in the least article thereof, to the flames, I demand of you to believe in my denial of this infamy now—which, with my whole soul, and calling Him above to witness to my truth, I do!"

"Ay, ye know wherefore ye would have me think ye cannot offend in this sort, fair clerk!" replied Henry, with a ferocious smile.

"Nay, sir, since he denies it, testimony is at hand!" said Sancgraal, observing, with inner exultation the powerful effect of this corrosive on the passions of the jealous Henry. He then turned, and in an equable tone desired Walter Wenlock to bring in the nuns of Clerkenwell. The sacristan retired, and a lull, as in the tumult of a storm, ensued. Indeed, not a word was uttered—scarcely a breath audibly drawn throughout the numerous assemblage, until on a sudden a voice penetrated into the chamber; and, strangely enough, the voice of a woman singing, or rather chaunting, in sweet, unwavering, and yet strangely and terribly unconscious and wandering tones, the verses of the dismal *Dies Iræ*! Roodspere's

heart quickened with an eager yet dreadful expectation. He recognised those pellucid notes; but the manner of their utterance!---His very soul seemed to faint and dissolve away within him as he listened to the unnatural music!---the fearfully regular and unintermitted strain that heralded the entrance of an apparition more dreadful in his sight than the visible incarnation of every form of imaginative terror! It was Lily-Virgin, colourless as the lighted penitential taper she bore in her hand, in the sunshine—dressed in a robe of coarse, black serge—attenuated almost to the snowy spiritual essence which shone through the thin covering of her fine clay, like light through transparent alabaster! But in her eyes shone a strange and dreadful lustre, because so unmeaningly indeterminate, and yet burningly fixed in the open air—meteors of madness! Roodspere did not doubt for an instant that the mind of his beloved was utterly wandered —perhaps for ever gone—when he saw the expression with which she encountered his impassioned and woful gaze. She shrunk fearfully back—ceased in her chaunt—and but that Prioress Barbara drew her rigidly on, she might very possibly have fled back the way she came. Finding this could not be, she gave a low, giggling laugh, and stepped for-

ward with a still more unnatural sturdiness and, so to speak, fierceness of step. Henry himself inquired, with surprise, "What is the meaning of this jaunty penitent, in her ways?"

"Extremity of grief, discovering her betrayer's treachery, sire, hath something set her mind ajar! She will be calm anon!" said Sancgraal, yet he also looked disturbed. "Lily-Virgin," he continued, and though his tones were wonderfully gentle, she started and cowered down as if some wild beast were about to spring on her, all the while he spoke. "Lily-Virgin!—once worthy of thy sweet name!—have I not spoken truth? Hath not this traitor priest won thee to violate the faith thou owest to the Lord of heaven and of earth?"

An intense silence awaited the reply.

"Is it doomsday then with us already, my lord? Alas! alas! I thought it should not come for many a year—until the green sods had lain cool awhile upon my brain and heart!" replied the unhappy girl, gazing fearfully around. "Why, what awful king is this that sits in judgment here? Nay, nay, I know well thou art not him I have betrayed, but him below!—and I wot well we are in hell, for I heard the flames bubbling as I came!"

"Why, how is this, Dame Barbara! Sent you not word she was well enough recovered from the delirium of her pains to appear and give evidence?" said Sancgraal, in tones of sharp rebuke to the new prioress.

"Our Lady witness, and so she is!—She gambols but thus at times, for wantonness!" returned Barbara. "She can answer enow to the point when she pleases!---Whose daughter art thou, Lily, child?—and what is thy brother's name?"

"Nay, that is a secret must never be told! —But the cardinal should have told the truth betimes, and then all would have been well!" said Lily, sighing as if her heart would break —and then giving her faint, internal giggle again.

"Nay, let me speak with her!—Let me ask her to remember!---Lily, my wife! my love! my all!—am I not thy husband, thy lover, thy Raphael—the father of thy babe, whom these fiends, that wear human faces for their masks, have murdered!"

Roodspere stretched his arms as he spoke, with wild fervour—but Lily turned away with an expression of horror, and, with her nameless and mysterious smile fluttering over her lips, murmured, "But it was right to murder it! I should have done it myself—only the

devils came and took it away, for it belonged to them!"

"They have maddened her with their superstitions, sire!—and marvels any man here that I take up my witnessing, before all men, against them and their deeds?" said Roodspere, with frenzied vehemence. "But, sire, this human fiend, mine accuser, hath herein most monstrously belied us both! This hapless lady is my wedded wife, and I am her husband, by the espousals of an ordained priest of the church, in the sight of God and man!"

"A priest and married!—married to a nun! Why, man, art thou gone frantic too?" shouted Henry, who, at this period, was disposed to regard the fact as more heinous than the seduction of which Roodspere was accused.

"I am her husband!—she is my wife!—I call upon thee, my Lily, to deny the unchaste and unhallowed crime they lay to my charge, and avouch me such before all this audience!" reiterated Roodspere, in the most moving accents of love and entreaty.

"Answer 'yea,' daughter, and send him to the flames he has deserved!" exclaimed Barbara.

"No, no, no!—we are not wedded!—He shall not be burned, lord prior!—He is my father's son!—How could I have wedded with

him?" returned Lily-Virgin, in evident and ghastly bewilderment.

"Come, sirs, we have had enough of this! Why keep ye not your lunatics in their cells at home, good women? I trow, Master Roodspere, this a work wherein even my lady marchioness, who is ever your stout friend, will not cry, 'Well done!'" said Henry, turning his wrathful and indignant visage on the accused.

"I pray your grace, nevertheless, to let this gentle victim remain, and to give me your hearing for a brief space, while I declare the truth, and the whole truth, in this unnatural tragedy!—after which it shall be as fully in your option as now to silence me for ever on earth!" said Roodspere, and after a sullen pause of reflection, the imperious judge nodded. But Sancgraal interposed with warmth.

"I trust, my good liege!" he exclaimed, "you will not suffer this self-condemned criminal to poison men's ears with calumnies against us, who would, like the dying snake, leave his sting in the foot that crushes him!"

"Why, there are none present but ourselves—and I have given a firm promise to hear whatever this man can allege in his behalf!" said Henry, with a grim smile. "Speak on, master visitor!—we know there are two sides

to every question, and no man shall interrupt you, giving us your version of the tale!"

To repeat what Roodspere now stated would be in reality to retrace the whole narrative of his discoveries and adventures in Westminster Abbey, which we have already detailed with every exactitude of particulars. He commenced from the moment of his arrival in it, and from the first suspicions of Dan Gloria's real personality infused in him by Cromwel, and which that worthy boldly and openly confirmed. He related the story of his intercourse with her, without disguise, for the occasion neither allowed nor required softening or varnishing in the revelations rendered imperative. The story was necessarily intermingled with that of his love for Lily-Virgin, and with the catastrophe of Anne and Percy's, dwelling as little as he possibly could on the latter circumstance. He told the whole legend of Dan Gloria's rescue of him—her confession that she was the wife of Hunne—and the circumstances under which they parted, and he declared, without circumlocution, his firm and unalterable persuasion that the prior had murdered her, and concealed the body! The amazement of the audience rose with every word; exclamations of horror, astonishment, and incredulity—mingled with the groans of

Father Gislebert, who had now joined the audience—were the fitting accompaniments of Roodspere's dreadful revelations. Sancgraal was the only person in the auditory who uttered no expression of contradiction, surprise, or indignation. He continued perfectly silent, and apparently unconcerned, until the close of the whole narrative.

"My liege," he then observed with remarkable calmness, "you may now well perceive for what cause mine enemies, and the enemies of the entire church, have spirited this young man so fairly out of sight!---that they might affirm these monstrous calumnies without fear of refutation!"

"I know not that the 'young man' is placed so utterly out of sight, if his grace will give me leave and means to produce him, my lord prior!" said Cromwel, suddenly, and turning with extreme eagerness to the king.

"If ye need force, master secretary, take what number of yeomen may content ye!" replied Henry.

"Sire, I shall need only some half-dozen masons, with their picks, to break into the marble below St. Edward's coffin!" said Cromwel. "It was from thence I beheld the red sweat of murder ooze!"

"In very faith," exclaimed Almoner Benson,

"and it was thence I heard the shriek that made mine hair bristle, encountering with my lord prior coming from the shrine, on the day master præcentor disappeared!—Ay, and the idiot boy of the Gatehouse hath declared to me since, that the same devil that strangled Hunne, came and took Dan Gloria thence!"

Sancgraal's countenance became lurid and livid with the succession of dreadful ideas that passed through his mind. "Sir! this is the very madness of calumny, from which it should behove an equitable judge to protect those who seek justice at his hand!" he exclaimed. "All men know that the chamber on which St. Edward's coffin is raised—is of solid masonry!"

"Why call ye it a *chamber* then?" said Cromwel.

"Nay, Prior Sancgraal, nay!—as, by the privilege of your office, well ye wot—the feretory is hollow, and used as a treasure chamber, in seasons of danger!" said Gislebert, and his words were rather groans than words, seemed forced by some overruling power from his unwilling lips.

"A treasure-chamber!—where are the keys of your strong-box then, master treasurer?" said Cromwel, eagerly.

"The prior of right hath them in his cus-

tody—and so hath now!" returned the old man, gaspingly.

"Surrender them, monk, or be adjudged guilty of this charge!" said Henry, in his most thundering tones.

"Am I guilty of these monstrous dreams because an old man is—old!—and his dotage —or rather his politic craft—is set against me —our father abbot being but just dead, and he purposing to make himself successor in my stead!—to whom my brethren and your grace have assured the election!" returned Sancgraal, in staggering accents.

"Old Islip gone!—in faith, if it prove thou hast such a treasure in thy secret strongbox—were I of his grace's counsel, I would have no more abbots of Westminster, to beard me in mine own palace royal!" said Cromwel.

"Thou art a bold counsellor, friend!---Yet, mahap, a wise one!" exclaimed the king with a stern smile, and turning to the prior, he continued, "Well, my good lord abbot-elect! what is your reply? Will ye yield these keys!—Ay, or no?"

"There are none—therefore none can I yield!—Where are the witnesses? Calumny, calumny, my liege, that spares not even the king on his throne!---Produce your evidence,

Master Roodspere! Women are great bablers! Let her speak, if it be true! And as for her husband, Hunne! All men knew that he slew himself, through dread of the fiend, that promised him eternal flames unless he retracted his accusations and heresies, and received his wife kindly home again!"

"Hunne! Will this tailor's ghost never cease to haunt us?" said Wolsey, interposing though with evident trepidation—well justified by the explosion of wrath his mediation provoked from the king.

"No, nor ever shall till it hath witnessed the fall of the mountain of corruption that hath spawned ye all!" shouted the monarch. "My lord prior!—I give ye until I have closed my judgment on him who runs this neck-and-neck race in villanies and accusations with thee, to muse on a reply! But either with Master Cromwel's pick, or your hidden keys, the shrine of St. Edward shall give up its secrets to our eyes ere another sunset rims the sea!"

"Well, sir, so be it!" said Sancgraal, after a profound pause, during which his mind appeared to steady itself even on the tremendous verge he had reached. "Meanwhile, sire, I demand your judgment! Have I not proven mine allegations? Should not this man be adjudged to the pains of heresy?"

"What say ye, my lord cardinal, who, erewhile but lately, did represent among us the infallible wisdom and powers of the supreme head of the church universal!" said Henry, turning with a renewal of all his vindictive irritation on the prelate.

"Sire, I cannot pronounce sentence on my own blood—and this man is my son---I own it with shame and with remorse---but my son he is!" said Wolsey; and his further speech was cut short by a shriek that cleaved through the ears and hearts of all present, and Lily-Virgin, rending herself with an unexpected effort from the clutch of Prioress Barbara, flew like a gleam of light, over the chamber—and before any interference could be made, lay panting like a dying bird, clasped to her lover-husband's breast!

"Let me have way, let me way!—He is the cardinal's son—the cardinal saith so!—and it was a devil that spoke through our Lady's lips and said he was Sir Amias Paulet's son, and Lily Roodspere's brother!—Give me way!—We are wedded!—We are man and wife!—He is my husband!—I am his wife!—Ye cannot part man and wife!—Ye shall not murther him alone! I am a heretic too!—I left our Lady's service—despised her miracles—for him! I am Raphael Roodspere's wife,

the heretic nun!—here is the ring that made us one!" These were the words that burst in articulate shrieks from the heart of the youthful victim of superstition—and with a frantic gesture she tore open her beautiful bosom, and took forth the ring of wedlock—long hidden there.

"It is well, woman! Heaven's vials of vengeance could not be exhaust without making you the means of his destruction!—What need of further proof of heresy, sir king, since this priest and nun own themselves thus to yourself, a wedded pair?" shouted Sancgraal.

"Demon! let thy malice for once stand foiled!—From this instant, I, Cardinal Legate of the Holy See, pronounce them released from all religious vows and conditions to the contrary, and confirm their marriage valid, lawful—ay, and blessed!" exclaimed Wolsey—anxious yet more in the utter ruin he saw impending over his monkish ally, to secure the adhesion of Roodspere.

"Your grace forgets!—You are no longer Cardinal Legate, and are under forfeiture for that unlawful assumption at all, within the realm!" replied Sancgraal. "Ay, and when the king's majesty knoweth, as he now shall from me, that your legateship, through me,

gave such advices to the queen as drove her on her appeal—mayhap he will not restore you to its privileges, even to make Mistress Anne's chaplain the husband of his youngest, but not most beautiful paramour!—*Fairest*, I grant ye!"

"Ah, wicked prior!—if thou speakest of me—none was I ever to Master Roodspere, and none shall now ever be, despite all thy lying promises!" ejaculated a nun, who had remained a dismayed spectatress of the scene thus far—and now advancing, and throwing herself on her knees before Henry, put back her hood, and revealed the debauch-swollen visage of the deposed prioress, Juliana! And in that attitude—yielding to the tide of indignation that now turned its changeable current in her depraved mind against the prior—she openly avowed Roodspere's entire innocence of the imputation regarding his connexion with herself, and the treacherous plot into which Barbara and Sancgraal had induced her to enter, under the influence of certain intoxicating drugs they gave her, and an old resentment against the accused for his virtuous disdain of overtures on her part! The king's countenance brightened singularly during this revelation; and, turning to Roodspere, he exclaimed, "Good sooth Master Doctor, this clears ye better than any-

thing ye can say in your own defence; and, an thou make recantation of thy mad Lollardy, we will see thou art vexed no more in the matter, and will give the cardinal his powers again for half-an-hour longer to knit your loves in a lawful bond!"

"Why, then indeed, in mercy, Thou hast done it, and removed this too vast temptation from my human election!" said Roodspere, in a low tone, almost a whisper, that yet seemed to have ascended audibly to the eternal footstool of the skies! They looked at him, and saw that his eyes were slowly rising upward, as if following the ascent of some winged celestiality into its native realm—were fixed for an instant, while all their visual light disappeared, as it were in a soar into infinitude,—and then his gaze reverted upon them with an evidently painful physical effort, and "My God be praised! she is dead!" announced the dismal fact to the awe-stricken audience. They looked upon her, and there she lay, a broken Lily indeed! — lifeless, pallid, dead, in her husband's arms—and yet with a lustrous expression of joy still beaming over her sweet, hushed features—the smile of love triumphant over death!

There was a considerable pause. "Take this crushed pearl hence, Mother Barbara!"

they then heard Roodspere murmur, "It shrined a purer spirit!—and do her strewments as to the chastest though the most loving and beloved wife ever God's holiest sunshine streamed around, and grew the brighter for the environing!—Thou wert harsh to her, living, but I know that I can trust this last office to thy womanhood!—Nay, Sister Juliana, touch her not! I forgive; but *that* were profanation!"

A few drops, strained like gum from a decayed bark, would force their way to Barbara's withered cheeks, as she took the powerless form into her bony embrace. But there was not another dry eye in the whole assemblage, saving Roodspere's and Sancgraal's! Neither of these shed a tear. The young husband, not even when for the last time pressing his lips to those cold and marble ones, which could no longer return the fond pressure, and their mortal chill glided through all his veins!—when, for the last time, fixing his gaze on that beautiful countenance, now lapsed into the dread serenity of death, he replaced Lily-Virgin's ring upon her finger, as if to confirm the eternal union of their loves, in defiance of the icy obstruction that had risen between them—last of so many! Not even when he covered those beloved features for ever from his gaze in her own dark robe, and the fair corpse

was borne forth in the arms of the nuns—not even then did Roodspere weep! Tears are not made for griefs like these! He watched the last fluttering of her robe as it disappeared in the breezy sunshine of the opening portals—seeming as if the wings of a dove yet lived around its dead form!—and then turned with an awful tranquillity to the king. "Your grace demands of me a recantation of my opinions! Are any other articles objected against me, or may I now speak in my defence?"

"Why, man, for a widower of three minutes, methinks thou art soon enough back to this world's cares!" said Henry, but also resuming his habitual suspicion and sternness of look. "Ay, speak for thyself, but, on my head! whatever my lady marchioness may say, unless ye make full recantation, ye stand condemned on as plain judgment as Martin Luther himself might be!"

"Ay, sir, and must be—unless you would have it go forth to the world, and to the pope's holiness, even with your queen's appeal, that the Lady Anne is indeed a favourer and encourager of all heresies!" said Sancgraal, with a fearful laugh.

"Speak freely, my dear son! Make *full confession* of your errors, and offences, and doubt not of the king's mercy and the

church's!" said Wolsey, still clinging, with the convulsive tenacity of a drowning man to weeds, to the fallacious resource he imagined he had yet in store in Roodspere's avowals.

"Fear not, lord cardinal, but that I shall speak the truth—and to the full!" replied Roodspere, with a solemnity and mournful lingering in his tones that struck like a funeral knell upon Wolsey's heart. "Not in wrath, not in malice; but because the hour hath come, and the maturity of the will of God, whose merest instrument and servant I have been—and must be—in the overthrow of your world-shadowing apostasy! And, sire, I pray you to listen to me as to a dying man, who is not merely desirous, but resolved, to seal the truth of his testimony with his blood! I cannot, and I will not, abjure the truths of Christ, which I have taught, and not the opinions of any man—Luther or other! And therefore must your laws, though yourself willed it not, being a king who reign by law, condemn me to the doom of fire! Amen! And now, as I have said, as to the words of a dying man, listen, sire, to my plain divulgation of the plot formed against the honour and success of your royal intended nuptials with the Lady Anne, of which it was sought to

make me the detestable and perjured instrument!"

With this preamble, the petrified Cardinal was doomed to hear Roodspere openly recite the particulars of his proposals to effect the disgrace and ruin of Anne Boleyn, by false accusations on the points where Henry was most furiously susceptible—and, in conclusion, to hear his intrigue with Rome, by means of his fellow legate, denounced! The proofs of the latter revelation, he knew but too well, could be found in the baggage of Campeggio. Roodspere spoke with a strange pitilessness—insensible, it seemed, to the destruction he dealt, as a weapon in the hands of its wielder—relentless as the angel of wrath pouring the vials of judgment empty over some condemned world! This circumstance, perhaps, as much as his guilt, and consciousness of irresistible detection, vanquished the last vestige of courage in Wolsey's heart; and when the king turned his terrible countenance on him, and inquired, in soul-shaking tones, if these words were the words of truth, he could only fall on his knees, and with uplifted hands, and streaming eyes, implore "Mercy, mercy!"

"O, Lord Jesu! was ever man so cheated in another as I have been in this!" groaned the king. "Take thyself hence, old man, or

we shall do sacrilege! Ay, hasten with what speed thou mayest out of our reach—into thy diocese of York!—whither we will send for thee when we would have thee answer for this monstrous treason! Pray, therefore, that thou never see our face again!—Master Doctor, for thee, do but retract thy blasphemy concerning the high mystery of the altar, and openly profess thy lady's innocence of all share in thy heretic misbeliefs, and thou art free and pardoned even now!"

"And so noble a fidelity shall win ye a still warmer favour with my lady marchioness, Master Roodspere,—and your grace will sigh the longer in vain! Ay, even Cæsar's *wife*—with so faithful a chaplain—may be suspected still!" breathed in Sancgraal's fiendishly mocking and exasperating accents.

"How say you, Master Roodspere! will you recant your hideous blasphemy in the matter of the Presence? Answer, as touching the Sacrament of the Altar, whether dost thou say, that it is the body of Christ, or wilt deny it?" thundered Henry.

"I do deny the bread and wine to become the body and blood of Christ, in any but a spiritual sense!" returned the reformer, in calm but energetic accents, as if he were graving them in adamant.

"Then mark how thou art confuted even by Christ's own words, *Hoc est corpus meum*!" replied Henry.

"So was Peter a rock, in a spiritual and figurative sense only!" returned Roodspere.

"Ho, by my faith, wilt thou chop school-logic with us, too? Nay, by St. George, we debased our royal majesty low enough when we banded theology with the butting ram of Wittenberg, thy teacher and exemplar, we doubt not, in all things," said Henry. "I will not argue it with thee, as if the question admitted of a doubt; but I say, and I swear it, by Him who is very God and man in the substance, and in no spirituality of bread and wine!—unless thou retract this foolish saying, though my lady marchioness would pay me for thy spared life with an absolute submission, thou shalt to the flames for it!"

"Sir, I am ready, and even now!" replied the reformer, and his look and gesture expressed fully as much.

"And so is the stake—so are the faggots!" came again, in Sancgraal's dreadful tones.

"They may serve a double turn!—Good friend, remember that sacrilege also is punished with the flames!" said Henry, whose exasperation, after wavering equally between these two contraries so long, finally enveloped

them both. "Why, this exceeds the miraculous devil-daring of Martin, before the emperor and his kings at Worms! But we promised we would be a gentle judge to thee, Master Roodspere, and so we will! Yet think not we will be pleaded out of our resolve, for we will not give time for this news to reach her, and thyself to be hardened in thine obstinacy by knowledge what friend thou hast at work on thy behalf! We give thee until to-morrow's dayspring only, to retract or not, and will leave those behind us who will see the law obeyed if thou continuest in thine obstinacy! Master Cromwel, and Doctor Stephen, ye shall be my commissioners for the enforcement of the same, with my Lords of Suffolk and Norfolk for your assistance, if strength be needed. But I trust, Master Roodspere, if you are so frantical as to die in this behalf, you will openly, and before all the people, avouch your lady's guiltlessness in the like!"

"I purpose, sir, to perish with this book in my hand," said Roodspere, raising his Bible in an attitude of sublime enthusiasm. "And within this book, I avouch, and will avouch, are contained all the beliefs, in matters religious, that ever I have known the Lady Anne to cherish! If this seems a hard and doubt-

ful mystery to some, let time be the interpreter!"

"Take him away!—'Tis a most pestilent fellow, whose mere society is contagious!" said Henry, turning from him in violent irritation. "Let us now search this shrine, and discover the enormities of the third in this devilish trio! But how is this, cardinal!—you have not stirred since we bade you hence to York!"

"Sire, I would speak but one word with the unhappy man who stands here — my destroyer, but whom I have also destroyed! O Raphael, my son!—son of my unhappy Alice!—make me not thy murtherer, body and soul!—for I wot well it is my wickedness hath driven ye out of all harbourage of faith! Recant, and save both soul and body, my son! Thy wretched father so implores it on his knees!" and Wolsey—the mighty, arrogant, imperious Wolsey, once—knelt, in the lowliest attitude of supplication, at the feet of his injured son!

"Father, I forgive, and will pray for you when I am, I trust, nearer to Him who grants human prayers that should be granted!" replied Roodspere, calmly. "Meanwhile, as ye shall hear I met my doom, judge whether my cause be of Him or not, who alone giveth

strength!—and hasten thou also out of the noonday darkness your superstitions have enveloped the cross of redemption withal, nigh from the hour of its exaltation on Calvary! And now I have but to forgive these men also, whose venomous scandals worked in the heart of her who is a seraph of the celestial choir, until it snapped its tender strings!—and Heaven forgive them, too!"

"Wilt thou extend thy gracious pardon to ourself next?" said Henry, with ironical fury. "Make hence, my lord cardinal, I say, and get thyself out of sight of this obstinate fellow's tragedy, since he will have it so!"

"If my lord cardinal trooped it with Campeius, and delivered his own rede, in Rome, 'twere best, methinks, my good liege!" said Suffolk, anxious to deal a parting blow at the fallen favourite. "It was never well in England when we had cardinals in it!"

"Duke of Suffolk!" said Wolsey, recovering for an instant some sparks of his ancient pride and revengefulness, "I say not that it is well—but that thou hast a head on thy shoulders, such as is, well thou wottest, thou mayest thank a cardinal! But thine ingratitude is as it should be also! Oh! had I but served my God as I have served my king, He would not have abandoned me in my old days so utterly!

—Only remorse and sorrow remain to me of all my glorious past!" And relapsing from his momentary revival, the discomfited and broken-spirited statesman tottered out of the Chapter-house of Westminster—alone!

"Norfolk," said Henry, after a moment's thought, "send word and warrant to this new Earl of Northumberland, that as soon as his old master shows himself at York, he do arrest and keep him in some strong castle of his own, until we can determine what were fittest to be done with him!—No friendly keeping that, I trow! And now for this thirdsman! What hast thou resolved upon, sir prior? Wilt thou surrender the keys of the shrine, or must we summon skilful trowelmen—?We promised our lady vengeance on ye of Westminster!—and we will keep as much of our word, certes, as we can!"

"Will ye also incur the curse of St. Edward, which, ye see, how it hath stripped yonder man?" said Sanegraal, now fairly and desperately at bay.

"Ha! do you threaten us? A-Becket's days are gone and past for ever, master monk! The people were with ye then, yet they hindered not the scattering of his brains over the altar!" shouted the king.

"What doth he clutch in his bosom?

My life upon it, he holds the key there!" exclaimed Cromwel.

"Even so, master secretary!" replied Sancgraal, in tones of fathomless gloom, as he drew forth the winch-key of the beeholes in the shrine. "Ye will find nothing in it but the plundered treasures of our manager, Gislebert, for whose sake only I have withstood entreaty thus far! But to prevent sacrilegious violence, come with me, all who will, and acknowledge how foully I am belied!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE MARTYR

Finis coronat opus!

The prior led the way, as he spoke, into the narrow passage between the Chapter-house and the Chapel of Henry VII., conducting into the church; and the whole excited auditory—judge, prisoner, monks, courtiers, and yeomen—followed in his steps. He paused not until he had reached the high altar—and then suddenly making a rush from amidst the throng, overthrowing the almoner on his way, he succeeded, with the advantage of the surprise, in reaching the door in the south aisle ascending to the Hermitage of St. Wulfin. One only, who instantaneously divined his dreadful purpose, sprang after him in pursuit, and, painfully familiar with the windings of the way, Roodspere continued it breathlessly into the lofty chamber so lately the scene of his captivity. Sancgraal felt that some one was close on his flight, through all its stages, and he increased it to the frantic velocity of a transit in a dream—and still distanced not his

pursuer! The colours in the windows of the galleries they traversed flew past Roodspere—arch after arch—pillar after pillar—the ground fled beneath his steps: but still the black fugitive eluded his grasp; still his own most strained rapidity could but keep panting on his traces! It resembled the never-overtaken flight of darkness before the light! — And Sancgraal continued to keep his breathless start until he had entered the Hermitage—until he had reached the verge of the tremendous chasm of the church below—until he had all but cast himself into the shattering abyss which it presented—when he felt himself seized, and drawn irresistibly back as with the strength of many men put in a single arm! It was the strength of Christian charity, in the arm of Raphael Roodspere! "Unhappy man! wouldst thou plunge into eternal bale, without an effort to rend thy soul from the destroyer's grasp?"

"Is it thou?—Author of all my crimes!—of all my misery!—Well; come on the same whirlwind to thy paradise!" and throwing himself upon Roodspere, Sancgraal grappled him with all his strength, and essayed, with the frenzy of hatred and despair, to drag him, thus embraced, over the tremendous verge! The struggle became instantaneously a mortal one!

—and, already spent by suffering and captivity, there was perhaps but little doubt Roodspere's resistance must have speedily succumbed to the fury of his adversary, and the horrible duality of doom have been consummated which his frenzied violence menaced—when suddenly he felt all his antagonist's powerful sinews relax—his clutch yield—his entangled, gladiator limbs grow weak and powerless as an infant's—his efforts cease—his dark locks stiffen round his head—his eyes almost spout from their sockets—and yelling "Yea, I am here!—whither dost thou summon me?"—he became as one thunderstruck—listening to what was in reality a cry of horror and indignation from the Chapel of the Kings, but which his guilty conscience probably transmuted into the voice of Dan Gloria, calling her murderer to doom from her now discovered sepulchre! — A snatch of time was thus afforded for the arrival of assistance, and a number of the king's attendants, ordered on the service, and headed by the Duke of Suffolk, arrived in that interval, and secured both the fugitive prior and his rescuer, or captor, as he might be doubtfully held.

The discovery of the frightfully mangled body of Dan Gloria—half self-devoured, in

the pangs of the starvation by which it was but too evident she had perished—heightened the indiscriminate fury of the king to an as yet unexampled excess. Themselves indignant and horrified at the crimes of their prior —and of late much disgusted with his violence and despotism—the monks of Westminster, by Henry's command, formally convicted him of murder and sacrilege, and the king directed that he should be burned alive on the following morning. Yet, by a strange impartiality of tyranny of which almost all the rest of his terrible reign continued to furnish the most wonderful parallels, he decreed that if Raphael Roodspere persisted in refusing to make open recantation of his errors, he should be burned at the same time, back to back, with his dreadful enemy! Perhaps, by adding so ignominious and horrible an association to his doom, he hoped to subdue the obstinacy of the young reformer, or find in it an excuse for the cruelty he projected. He made a show of favour to him by leaving the execution of the sentence in the hands of a man who might be supposed to have leanings to his safety. But Cromwel was above all things a courtier, and had been taken into such sudden and extreme favour by the king, that he had more reason to endeavour to preserve it than to labour at the preserva-

tion of one whose acquaintance had brought him so little benefit. Gardiner was also associated with him in his commission, whose rancorous hostility against Roodspere was not sweetened by any such honey, and who imagined he saw the path to royal favour in coincidence with that of his malignant sentiments. The Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk—the former a bigoted Catholic, and the latter a subservient courtier—were not likely to offer any obstruction to the causes tending to Roodspere's destruction.

Nevertheless, Cromwel displayed on this occasion some of the generous and kindly qualities that throw a redeeming light over the less advantageous features of his unscrupulously ambitious character. He exhausted every argument and persuasion—every resource of what he doubtless held to be reason—even the sarcastic wit, of which he was master, to turn Roodspere from his resolution of perishing, in support of his opinions, at the stake. He had a ready armoury at hand, and among the rest, the fallacy of a constancy which would leave him in ignominious juxtaposition with so monstrous and convicted a criminal as Prior Sancgraal—he did not hesitate to urge, in the presence of the unhappy man himself. But Roodspere accepted, with

mournful resignation, even this dreadful addition to a doom in itself the most painful and hideous which the flesh of man can be subjected to. Cromwel at length desisted, in sheer weariness, and hoping that the intervening hours devoted to meditation and solitude, and the assistance of Latimer, whom he sent for from the city, might have more effect than his arguments and entreaties, he desired to remove Roodspere to a chamber in the monastery for the night. But the reformer expressed an earnest wish to be allowed to spend the night with his condemned fellow-prisoner, in the Hermitage of St. Wulfin, where both had hitherto remained, under guard of four of the king's yeomen. Cromwel assented at last, with great reluctance; but with some hope that the visible horror and dismay of the criminal prior, at the prospect of his menaced doom, would exercise a salutary influence in deterring Roodspere from voluntarily submitting to the same fate.

From the moment the announcement of his doom was made to Sancgraal, he had abandoned himself to a motionless and silent desperation. Until then, the efforts of a dozen guards, and the strong cords that bound all his limbs, had scarcely availed to prevent him from renewing his violent efforts at self-

destruction. He strove to dash out his brains against the wall—he wrenched at his cords till they cut deep wounds into his flesh! But from the moment when Cromwel—himself aghast with horror and indignation, and covering him with execrations and reproaches, related the horrible condition in which the searchers had found the body of Dan Gloria—he became apparently stunned and powerless, as an ox when the butcher smites with his mallet on its brain. Yet, as soon as Cromwel had taken a heavy-hearted leave for the night, and the two condemned remained alone with their strong guard, and locked in the lofty dungeon with them, the reformer turned to his desperate and stubborn fellow-captive, and in mild and pitying accents, entreated him to employ what little time remained to either of them, with him, in imploring the mercy of their God, and pardon for all offence, through the merits and intercession of the sole Mediator, Jesus Christ, who for sinners died.

"God!—What God have I?—The cavernous darkness below, to which, from the days of my miserable childhood, mine orisons were muttered?—or the immense silence which thou deemest listens throughout the universe?" returned the miserable man, arousing himself, after a considerable pause, from his stupor.

"The God—if God that be—which hath created me thus miserable, shall I mock with an unfelt submission? So admirable and express a workmanship, made merely to suffer!—For wherefore else hath he created me?—Why gave He me this infinite imagination!—thirst for enjoyment!—boundless desire for supremacy and power! fathomless longing after love and beauty—since all must end in a felon's carcass! Since they have been the fiends that lured me to my doom! And what baseness, what crouching nullity of spirit is this in thee, that thou shouldst desire to save me, thy bitter, thy remorseless enemy?—I would not have forgiven thee one tear that ever Lily-Virgin shed; and I have slain her! Oh, no tongue can tell, by what infinitude of tortures—of racking thoughts—of hideous fears—I slew her!—No! go to thy bowers of unfading amaranth!—thy golden sunset rivers of paradise!—thy crown of eternal light!—and let me depart into the silence of my darkness, untroubled by thy words!—If the wages of sin be death;—death eternal!—I have earned them!"

"Alas, thou desperate man!—one of the unnumbered holocausts of victims to thy direful superstition! Know ye not who hath said:—'I will not the death of a sinner, but

rather that he repent and live?'" said Roodspere.

"I desire NOT to live!—I desire but to be what I WAS ere I was what I AM!" returned the prior, gnashing his teeth. "Talk not your madness to me now, in this gasp of all-devouring time!—I have fathomed the depths of controversy, and I know that nothingness is the beginning and the end thereof!—Trouble me no more!—Thou talkest Scripture as if it were thy natural speech, and I say: Why tormentest thou me before the time?"

Nevertheless Roodspere persevered. A brother, who had laboured to save a most dear brother from the eternal chastisements which he dreaded for this man, his remorseless and insatiable enemy—could not have laboured with more unwearied earnestness in winning Sancgraal to consider the awful extremities of the position in which he stood. For a long time the prior listened in obdurate silence, somewhat diversified with smiles of scorn and delirious incredulity. But at length Roodspere had the satisfaction to discern that a few firedrops—they could not be called tears—strained their way to Sancgraal's burning eyelids, and slowly dripped upon his breast. He could not remove these signs of emotion with his bound hands; but Roodspere, who

was altogether unshackled, gently raised his scapulary, and wiped them away.

"I know you would not have men deem you wept, as lamenting over your doom!" he said. "And our guards do sleep around us, wearied in the flesh! What hinders then but we may fulfil the word, and forgiving each other our trespasses, look more boldly heavenward for forgiveness?"

"Master Roodspere!—herself said it; I cannot repent of a life in a few brief hours!" replied Sancgraal, evidently moved. "But this hereafter of which thou speakest to me, is but the echo of a word in a babbling cave, that returns men their own utterance in many tones! Let me die as I have lived—and do thou live to make other men like me impossible!—But this believe; I slew not Hunne! His own madness, being wrought upon, drove him on suicide!—And for the miserable woman his wife—Cromwel lies!—She fed not, wolflike, on her own flesh!—She had her dagger with her—Ritter Sampson's dagger! The rats in the sepulchre made her the grisly sight they say she is!—and had she not had her dagger, she swallowed the deepest sleep of mandragora ere she entered the shrine!—I listened oft at its marbles, and heard no sound! —It is man's first law to protect himself!—and

the entire church, in my person, was in danger! —But what matters it in what guise we stalk over the stage of the momentary existence we fill?—As well might the superior powers curiously inquire how the day-fly fills up its hours of the sun!—It obeys the laws of its being, and perishes!—So will, so must I!"

And yet Roodspere relaxed not from his earnest efforts. The use of those few brief hours of existence which also were all that remained to him, appeared to be concentrated in the task of awakening his fellow-captive from the atheistic dream in which, as in the lethargy of opium, the conscience of Prior Sancgraal, had taken a deadly repose. For a long time, indeed, the prior's fears were evidently altogether physical.

"The flames, the flames, the flames!—Why, even the dead carcase of Hunne shrunk as it were in agony under their lapping tongues!—And they shall drink our living blood!—hiss and sparkle in our veins!" he frequently exclaimed. "But thou at least hast it in thy power to shun horrors so infinite!—I have crimes to expiate!—thou hast none!—Live, Raphael Roodspere, live!—I do not entreat thee now, for the reasons that of old, I would have had thee to live—when dotard Gislebert dreaded for thy life, in the Sanctuary, because

I knew that only thine existence could yield me the harvest of revenge I sought! I would have thee live to do good to those who are not past all redemption, if redemption any there be!—I am."

"Why, what example should I yield, betraying and denying the truth, in dread of the tortures that man can inflict?" said Roodspere. "There is not that thing, of all the few that are mine, or have ever been, I value so little as the life I shall relinquish!—And would you have me deny the least valuable of my possessions, to obtain the greatest in the celestial gift?"

Sancgraal burst into a wild shriek, rather than peal, of laughter—laughed till the vaulted roofs of the church re-echoed to his insane mirth—until the drowsy guards started up in horror and alarm! And then, in a strain of diabolic sarcasm and frantic merriment, he jeered at every notion of retribution, or even of existence, beyond the grave, and with an alternate frenzy of scorn and derision, assailed the arguments and persuasions with which Roodspere endeavoured to stem the torrent of blasphemous unbelief. Day came, and found them still engaged in this terrible controversy, doomsday to both! But the first grey stream of light that penetrated into the Her-

mitage of St. Wulfin seemed to bring a message of the most appalling import to Sancgraal. He lost speech, his limbs were slackened with terror, and an universal horror came over him; during which all the consolatory and kindly expressions of Roodspere were as entirely wasted as if he had never spoken. The latter resigned himself at last to prayer, which he uttered aloud, in some hopes of yet attracting the prior's attention, devoting his earnest supplications much more on behalf of the unhappy criminal than on his own. This benign labour was interrupted, shortly after the break of day, by the entrance of Father Gislebert, accompanied by Nicholas of Cologne, who brought with them a chalice of wine and bread. It became immediately obvious that the old men were permitted to offer the last function of their church to Sancgraal. Gislebert spoke not; but Nicholas, imagining he roused the condemned prior from a slumber, in a faint and awestricken tone announced their purpose.

"Who calls me?—My name is not Sancgraal!—It is the Lord Liulph Bigod!—I was cozened and cheated of my name, but I will answer to no other!—So when she shrieks 'Sancgraal!' I need make no reply!' said the prior, starting again from a species of stupor. "Cry you mercy, old fathers!—who

are ye?—Is this the old monk who slew his son with a prating speech, to make himself abbot of Westminster?"

"No, my good lord!—Alas, Master Cromwel has named Brother Quodvultdeus to the office—and the brethren dare not resist!" replied Nicholas. "Ay, and, sir, he hath bidden our treasurer here account for all the moneys he hath received since he was our official—finding no hoard where they expected it, in the shrine! Or else they will condemn him for a miser and malversator!"

"Speak out plainly still, old man!—ye need not be so careful of my fair fame now!—and say that I spent all ye could save and steal, like a very prodigal, abroad!" said Sancgraal, with a dismal laugh. "But what manner of breakfast is this ye have brought me?—Hast thou for once been merciful, old Gislebert, and bringst me truly salvation in the cup?" He uttered the words with wild eagerness; but Gislebert shrunk away, as he replied, "Nay, son, crown not thine offences even by the wish for so enormous an escape from thy punishment!—I come to yield thee the church's rites, and to prepare thee for the doom that full certainly await thee, grievous sinner that thou art!"

"I am but what you have made me, fa-

ther!—since so you style yourself!" said Sancgraal. "Well!—at least I may thank you, thus, that I was not a fratricide when the Lord Bigod perished under my malediction!—For the rest, thou seest!—I am, I tell thee, what thou hast made me!—The punishment light on thy head!—What other harvest, prithee, should nightshade yield but its own poison-berries?—Such acids as were poured into my soul would have curdled the milkiest nature!—I might have been—but what boots it now to conjecture?—Thou hast made me what I am—rejoice in thy work!—But I will not touch of these false panaceas: they bear no healing on their wings!—If I listen to man's promises again, it shall be to this good Origen's, who believes the devils also may be saved!—That is heresy with thee I know!—Saving doctrine with me!—Master Roodspere, I cannot play the good thief's part, for I cannot believe!—But yet teach me of thy doctrine of the sacrament, and mayhap I may espy a reasonableness in it, and take a faith which the madness of our dogmas overthrew in my heart!"

Gislebert remained in a manner petrified with horror and grief, at what he doubtless considered a crowning act of criminality, while Roodspere, in the most impassioned and

earnest manner, expounded the reformed doctrine of the sacrament. And finally, whether Sancgraal were moved by his arguments, or desired only to show more emphatically his hatred of the formulas whose trammels had deprived his powerful spirit of all free and natural exercise, he expressed a desire to partake of the elements, with his new teacher, in the simplicity of the reformed observance. Roodspere consented, after earnestly impressing upon him the necessity of making it a sacrament of penance and reconciliation, by a spiritual instead of a physical oblation; and the two prisoners were engaged in the extraordinary rite when Cromwel arrived, with an unexpected reinforcement. Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, entered with him! Cranmer had arrived post from Grafton, where he had now been domiciled some time, obscure tidings of Roodspere's premature trial having arrived there; Latimer had frequently sought to commune with the prisoner, but had always hitherto been denied access by the monastic authorities—and Ridley the same, who had arrived in London some days previously on the like errand of friend-hip.

A more fearful struggle than any he had yet passed through now awaited Roodspere. He had to withstand the prayers and entreaties

and persuasions of the men whose wisdom and virtue he valued most in the world, to induce him to change his resolution. He had to withstand the tears—the affectionate implorings of Cranmer—who even assured him that to yield would be productive of the greatest advantage to their cause, and dissipate the suspicions that would else continue attached to their patroness. Roodspere found a motive for his heroic persistance even on her account, having satisfied himself by inquiries that Anne Boleyn resolutely adhered in the line of honourable policy he had chalked out for her. He then firmly and unalterably announced his determination to perish in maintenance of the truths he had divulged. "I cannot—I will not tergiversate therein, could the sole earthly good I had be restored to me!—'For if the trumpet,' O, father Cranmer, 'give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?—My treasure is in heaven; let me go thither and rejoin it!—Remember Bilney's sufferings!—What were the doom of bodily anguish compared with them?!"

And from this settled, this unalterable resolution, no argument, no entreaty could induce him to swerve. In vain did Cromwel urge every persuasion that seemed likely to prevail with a young man, who had but

encountered the first rebuff of the tides of existence. The prospects of ambition—the grief of Wolsey—the joy of the malignant Gardiner—all was in vain; and the latter, entering with the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, put a decisive period on the fruitless labour. Gardiner brought a formal sentence on the two prisoners, signed by the king, with reservation of the power of recantation to Roodspere—which he now finally and unshakenly refused.

Nothing remained but to execute the terrible sentences, and both prisoners were ordered to accompany the commissioners to the Place of the Ordeal, where a stake was erected. Both declined partaking of any food. It was remarkable that Gardiner had become one of the bitterest and most relentless of Sancgraal's maltreaters. Cromwel had ceased from his upbraidings, but Gardiner appeared as if he could not heap sufficient contumely on the head of his quondam associate and ally. He reviled him as a wretch whose crimes would bring the church into universal contempt and disrepute, and complete the ruin of the monastic orders he had affected to support! And Sancgraal's spirit revived to confront the insults of a man whom his fiercer and loftier nature had ever despised, and whom he now

overwhelmed with the last display of his terrible powers of invective and denunciation. A keen contest arose between the secretaries, Cromwel upbraiding his rival with the indecency of the display he had provoked, and the two dukes abruptly and imperatively closed the discussion by ordering the procession to death to be formed. Both desired to hasten the completion of the hideous rite, from different reasons. The Duke of Suffolk, an adherent of the new opinions, but also a courtier, was not ill-content that one who was looked upon as a main obstacle to his master's success would be removed in the person of Roodspere. The Duke of Norfolk had long regarded him with dislike and suspicion, as one who influenced the mind of his niece contrary to his own bigoted policies, and threatened to introduce the new ideas to power. Both dukes were anxious, in the person of Sancgraal, the one, to terminate a deadly scandal to his cause, and the other to produce it in its strongest light, before the public gaze.

Roodspere readily presented himself for the descent to the place of execution; but suddenly Sancgraal's renewed fortitude entirely deserted him, and his limbs refused to perform their office when he was commanded to rise and

follow in the train. Gislebert revived from his mummy-like fixity of horror and anguish, to advance towards his miserable son, and entreat him not to shame their cause utterly—and admit the allegations of his calumniating destroyers—before the people, by this display of pusillanimity.—"Devil!—devilish old man! thou hast deprived me even of my noble blood, for whose sake at least I might have perished valiantly!—But, nay, Gislebert!—dear father, if I am thy son!—ask them for a little more time!—I tell thee, I hear her singing the Gloria throughout the whole church!—There is not a stone, not a pillar, not a fretted pinnacle, but vibrates with it—even as she sung it when she returned from Italy!—I cannot die with this noise of a myriad linnets in mine ears!—Tell them I would yet confess and take absolution from thy hands!—Thou sayest our church can bind and loosen at her will: loosen me or ere I perish utterly!"

Gislebert, with wo-begone joyfulness, signified this desire of the condemned monk to the Duke of Norfolk; who, not unmindful that Sancgraal had been his confessor, would perhaps rather have denied the indulgence. But it could not very decently be refused; and Gislebert retired, supporting the tottering per-

son of his son, to the extremity of the vast ark of the Hermitage. Roodspere was grieved at the delay and its cause almost alike—this relapse into confidence in superstitious formulas, and neglect of the true means, as he deemed them, of redemption. And besides it afforded a space for his friends to renew their entreaties—Cranmer at least! Latimer had ceased to urge any save with his mournful looks; and, from the first, Ridley's kindred spirit had divined the unalterable nature of the resolve formed in his young teacher and master's purposes. Cromwel also mingled not in the argument, keeping his eye fixed uneasily on the remote prisoner. Whatever passed between Gislebert and his unhappy pupil was never clearly known; but after a considerable, and apparently vehement and contending though whispered dialogue, the watchful secretary perceived Gislebert proceed, quaking in every limb, and take a phial of some dark liquid from a shelf over Sancgraal's furnace. He beckoned to Father Nicholas, at the same time, to bring him the chalice; but Cromwel's alertness disconcerted the manœuvre. "Nay, good father! — we know my lord prior is well skilled in hellebores; but he must not use them now to cheat us of the only reparation he can yield the deluded people, and his

victim!—If he cannot walk, tell him we will have him carried to the place—where also Hunne was carried!"

This last hope destroyed, the courage of desperation returned to Prior Sancgraal—and once more the procession was marshalled, and now descended without further interruption into the church. But Sancgraal's horror and agitation, as he approached the scene of his greatest crime, excited the pity even of his most obdurate enemies. Roodspere compassionately offered his support, in the manner he thought likely to be least offensive. "Let the people see we die in Christian charity together!" he said, giving his arm, and he found he had speedily to bear almost the entire weight of the nerveless frame that convulsively clutched at the offered assistance. But Roodspere also was nigh deprived of his firmness by the shock of an unforeseen spectacle that awaited them as soon as they entered the transept. Cromwel had determined to make every possible use of the opportunity to bring the monks into popular odium, and the body of Dan Gloria—a sight of unutterable horror!—lay on a bier before the shrine, exposed to the gaze of the multitudes who thronged from all parts to behold it. The procession had to pass this terrible object—a mass of gory

pulp and corruption, scarcely decently veiled by the remaining tatters of the scarlet robe of a chorister!

Nevertheless, and to the general surprise, this awful spectacle appeared rather to revive Sancgraal's courage than to complete his dismay. To Roodspere's amazement, he even paused as they passed the dreadful relics, and gazed over them with an eye almost of curiosity, and inquiry. "Ay, this is death!" he heard him mutter. "A rotten reed upon an eternal shore of silence!—Oh, and for such a possession as that have I lost all!—ruined all!—For, look around, Sancgraal!—behold yonder the broken and desecrated shrine of St. Edward!—From this hour, I wot well and prophesy, all these glories shall pass away, and this gorgeous temple become only a mighty sepulchre!"

"Let it become so!—Let the living hearts of men become the temples of the Most High!—I also can prophesy, and say, that the hour is at hand!—Master Cromwel, I pray you let these mangled relics have decent and speedy earth thrown over them!—This Dan Gloria was once your friend—as she was also mine!" said Roodspere.

"I will have a care, and the speedier for your reminding, Master Roodspere!" said

Cromwel. "My lord abbot! is all the gear in readiness?"

"Yea, noble master secretary, but I fear me the people will be for rending our late brother and prior to pieces!" replied the meek and butter-lipped accents of the newly-exalted almoner, Quodvultdeus.

It seemed as if the sight and words of this man, his superceder, but whom he despised so infinitely, restored all the passion and pride of Sancgraal's nature to their ascendancy. The new abbot shrunk back in his robes, from the tremendous expression of his countenance! The fury, the despair, the disdain, the defiance of the leader of the celestial revolt, were in it; while in accents jagged, broken, impetuous as thunder cleaving its way through a dense cloud, Sancgraal shouted, "Let them rend me!—since such a slave as thou art wears the mitre of Westminster, no marvel dogs have become wolves!"

"I will teach them they shall as little cheat the law now, as henceforth, since my new Lord Abbot hath cheerfully abandoned the right of sanctuary!" returned Cromwel, making a gesture to the yeomen to gather more closely round the prisoners. The whole group then passed out of the church into the great cemetery before the north front of the

Abbey. An immense concourse crowded it—formed in nearly three equal proportions of the Sanctuary rabble, citizens of London, and inhabitants of the neighbouring palace. The first-mentioned of these masses, understanding that their privileges were forfeit through the crimes of the prior, and thoroughly recovered from the panic-superstition of the Sweating Sickness, received him with a storm of yells and execrations that might have dismayed the most innocent and courageous of victims. Sancgraal only smiled. "They hooted Hunne's carcass the same, the hell-pack!" he observed, contemptuously. Roodspere's numerous partizans among the citizens of London received him with murmurs of mournful and respectful sympathy. The courtiers held a marked neutrality.

Everything was in readiness. The new Abbot was desirous to show how serviceable and obedient he could be. A stout tree, stripped of its bark and branches, and notched like a bear-pole, with standing places for the sufferers' feet a little above the ground, was erected in the Place of the Ordeal. It was surrounded by faggots dipped in pitch, and a massive chain inserted in staples in the stake awaited to clasp the victims to their torment. The uproar had meanwhile subsided, and the

multitude were hushed in eager expectation of catching any words that might fall from either of the condemned. The final word of an existence is sometimes the key and explanation of its entire mystery—always, of solemnity and awful stress in the recollection of survivors, though perchance of no other significance and importance but that it *was* the last of so wonderful a thing as the meanest of rational existences is!—But if the populace expected a speech from either of the condemned, they were mistaken. "I will say nothing that might prove to the prejudice of my lady and mistress—charging you only, father, to deliver to her the word I gave you, and to witness to her that I met my end as one who knew that he perished for the truth!" said Roodspere, in a low tone to Cranmer. "I would only that Bilney were here to see it also—but your report may do as well, and spare him some pain!—And now, my fellow in this bitter pass!—I do beseech of you to take your sufferings patiently, and to hope they may be accepted in expiation of your wrongdoing, as also I hope mine shall!—Sir, you shall have the advantage of the wind, for it blows from this quarter, and will put you to the worse pains!—Master Mugwort, give me the easter look, if it be in your bestowal!"

The little jailer was in attendance with Smiling Willie, impressed into the service by Cromwel's orders, and his own willingness to help rid the world of Prior Sancgraal. But Roodspere's words overcame him, and he sobbed forth, "But, Sir, I pray you, have mercy on yourself, and put us not to the assay!"

"Ay, but, master, let us burn the Devil, and be rid of all the trouble he brings on us for aye!" said Smiling Willie, pointing at the prior.

Cranmer's suffocating sobs and renewed entreaties again assailed the young martyr's courage. "My son, ye die on a point which is yet open and moot among us all!—Your resolve may be but an obstinacy in self-judgment too nigh akin to these new men who, in Germany, set themselves up each to be in his proper person an absolute church!"

"Nay, father, for thou also wilt live to say: 'This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner!'" returned the young but inspired religionist. "And would you have me turn back now that I am in sight of the celestial city of the recompense, at whose gates of eternal bliss my Lily awaits to welcome me?—Remember what he is who hath said: Be thou

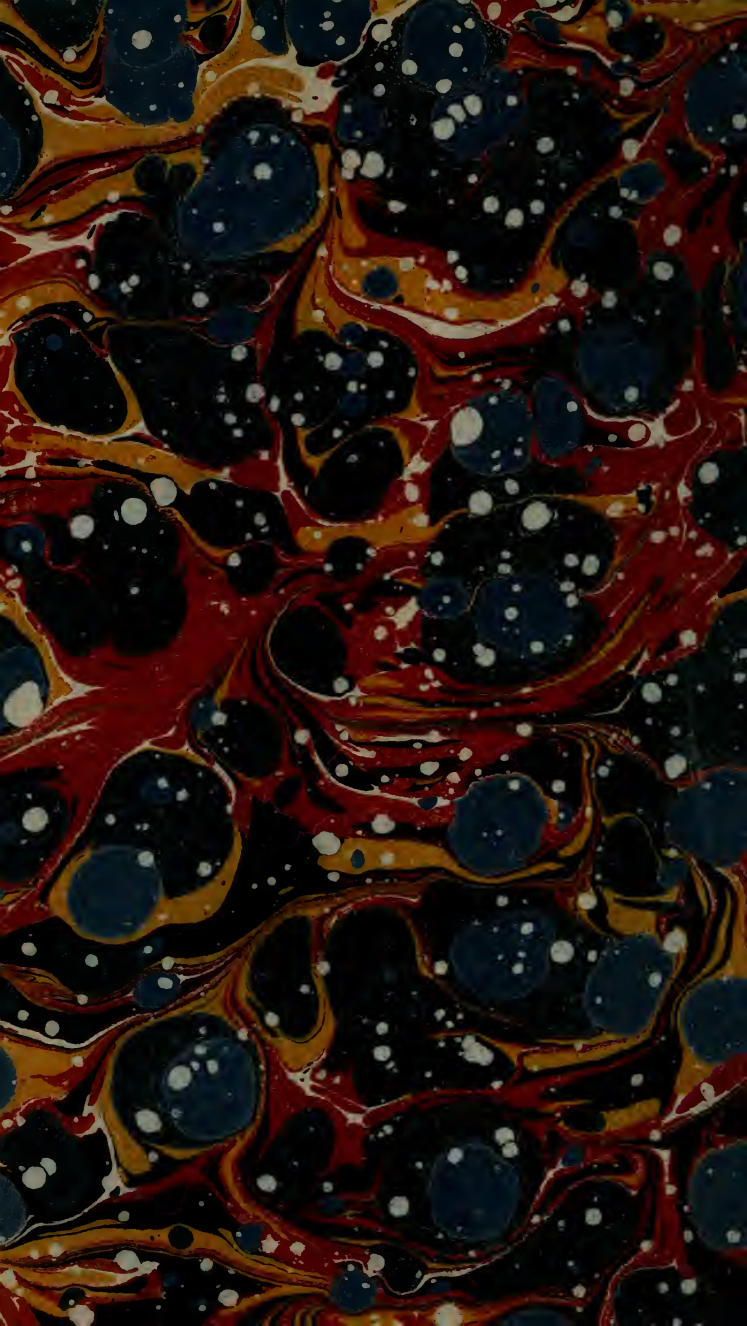
faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!" With these words, Roodspere embraced his three friends in succession—took an earnest and very kindly farewell of Cromwel, whose forgiveness he asked for any offence he might have caused him in the course of their acquaintance—shook hands with the son-in-law of Marchant Hunne, and a few others of his followers who also ventured on so public a mark of adhesion—waved his hand in eternal and benignant farewell to Sancgraal, and himself ascended unfalteringly the piles of crooked billets to the destined niche—himself drew the chain round his girdle, and flung the links to Mugwort, whose office it should have been. But it was speedily found that Sancgraal was not prepared to imitate this heroic example. Nay, when the decisive moment came, and he was commanded to take his place at the stake, he suddenly made a violent rush, like a baited bull, into the crowd, shrieking in despairing accents "Sanctuary! Sanctuary!" But the Sanctuary men themselves assisted in his recapture, and with the violence and brutality to be expected from such a populace, forced him back to the scene of punishment, and assisted in securing him to the stake. As soon as this service was effected, Cromwel himself lighted a torch, and ap-

proached on the side where Roodspere was fastened. He raised it, and with extreme agitation both in his look and accent, intreated Roodspere to utter but the words "I recant," and to descend from his horrible eminence, to life and safety! "Nay, sir! for even now I behold the gates of paradise open to receive me, and one beckon me who I know will gladly welcome me!—I recommend my spirit to him who gave it, and desire no further discourse with any in the flesh!"

"Fire the pile who will—I cannot!" said Cromwel, throwing the lighted torch away. But Smiling Willie had no such scruples, and seizing the instrument exclaimed, "Let us burn the Devil!" and set fire to the faggots beneath Sancgraal's feet. The pitch lighted in all directions, and in a moment a black cloud arose and enveloped both sufferers. A torrent of flames succeeded, rolling in an eddying and roaring whirl to the summit of the stake—and from the midst of the flames two voices came, uttering simultaneously, the words: "God!—destroy me utterly!" "God! multiply thy mercies on all mankind, and LET THY KINGDOM COME!"

THE END.

LONDON: J. MORTIMER, 141, STRAND.



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